MEDALS OF HONOR

by

JAMES HOPPER

With Illustrations by

JOHN ALAN MAXWELL

World War History

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JAMES HOPPER, born in 1876 of French and Irish parents, is a resident of California. He studied at the University of California and was quarterback on the football team and bow oar on the crew. After graduating in 1898, he went to the Philippines, and returned with his first stories. He has written over three hundred since, published in leading magazines.

He was correspondent in France for *Collier's Weekly* from 1914 until the end of the war and was in the midst of action in the front line trenches. At Cantigny he went over the top with the infantry, returning with a wounded man.

His previously published works include: *Caybigan, The Trimming of Goosie, The Freshman, What Happened in the Night,* and "9009," written in collaboration with Fred R. Bechdolt.

FOREWORD

This book has to do with men who won the Army Congressional Medal of Honor of the United States during the war which has been called the Great War. The Medal existed before that, having been established on the twelfth of July, 1862, in the following words:

> "Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be, and is hereby, authorized to cause two thousand medals of honor to be prepared with suitable emblematic devices, and to direct that the same be presented, in the name of Congress, to such non-commissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities, during the present insurrection. And that the sum of ten thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby, appropriated out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of carrying this resolution into effect."

Over half a century later, when we had entered the Great War, with millions of our young men under arms, Congress established the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal. And the Medal of Honor was made a supreme reward in the following act:

"Be it resolved —— —— that the provisions of existing law relating to the award of Medals of Honor to officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the Army be, and they hereby are, amended so that the President is authorized to present, in the name of the Congress, a medal of Honor only to each person who, while an officer or enlisted man of the Army, shall hereafter, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

The rigor of the new conditions is clear. The conditions are five. The Medalist must be (1) an officer or enlisted man of the Army, who (2) in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, (3) should distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity, (4) at the risk of his life, (5) above and beyond the call of duty.

Of two million men we sent to the battle fields of France, just ninety fulfilled these conditions and wrested this highest of honors. And twenty-eight of these died in doing so.

Curiosity was the impulse which started this book. Some time after the war had ended, stories began to appear in the papers telling of the return of some "hero" with the Congressional Medal of Honor pinned upon his breast. These stories seemed to this author obscure. Although he had seen a good deal of the great conflict as correspondent from

1914 to the end, he could not understand from the newspaper stories the deeds described. He could not visualize them. Some soldier, single-handed, had taken a machine-gun nest, or several machine-gun nests, and captured umpteen prisoners. Yes, but how? How had he captured a machine-gun firing two hundred and fifty shots a minute, or several of these machine-guns and their entrenched crews? And what sort was he? Who were these men, these flaming heroes? The newspapers gave their names, the town they had come from, but the picture remained dim. What did they look like, these men? What kind were they? Just how had they performed their extraordinary deeds?

The author's curiosity grew. Then it occurred to him that perhaps other people were as curious as he, were asking themselves the same questions. And that it might be interesting to answer them.

He set out in search of Congressional Medal of Honor men. He selected twelve at random so that they might offer a fair cross-section of the fifty probably still alive. He went to them, where they lived—ten years after—and wheedled out of each his story. The seeking took him over a large part of the United States. Two medalists he found in New York; one in New Jersey, one in Connecticut.

Two were found in Chicago, three in California, and one up in Idaho.

And a pleasing assignment it proved to be. Likeable characters indeed he found them all to be. There was one of the twelve who took himself seriously—not over-seriously but who, being grave of temperament, sincerely felt respect for the reward he had won and the deed that had won it. Another had a slight tendency toward flamboyance. A third spoke the abstract military language, and stubbornly refused to be inveigled into the smallest personal outpouring. And all the others were boys—boys even ten years after—engagingly modest, lovingly simple, possessed of an ingenuousness, an innocence almost, that tugged at the heart. When the author had finished, for a long time he felt at a loss and bereaved.

JAMES HOPPER

Following is a complete list of those who won the Congressional Medal of Honor during the Great War, including those who died in winning it.

Joseph B. Adkison, Sergeant, Company C, 119th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Memphis, Tenn.; born in Atoka, Tenn.

Jake Allex, Corporal, Company H, 131st Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Chicago; born in Serbia.

Edward C. Allworth, Captain, 60th Infantry, 5th Division; residence, Oregon; born in Crawford, Wash.

Johannes S. Anderson, First Sergeant, Company B, 132d Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Chicago; born in Finland.

Charles D. Barger, Private, first class, Company L, 354th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Stotts City, Mo.; born in Mount Vernon, Mo.

John L. Barkley, Private, first class, Company K, 4th Infantry, 3d Division; residence, Blairstown, Mo.; born in Blairstown, Mo.

Frank J. Bart, Private, Company C, 9th Infantry, 2d Division; residence, Newark, N. J.; born in New York.

Donald M. Call, Corporal, 344th Battalion, Tank Corps, United States Army; residence, Larchmont Manor, N. Y.; born in New York.

Louis Cukela, Sergeant, 66th Company, 5th Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps; residence, Minneapolis; born in Austria.

Michael A. Donaldson, Sergeant, Company I, 165th

Infantry, 42d Division; residence, Haverstraw, N. Y.; born in Haverstraw.

WILLIAM JOSEPH DONOVAN, Lieutenant Colonel, 165th Infantry, 42d Division; residence, Buffalo; born in Buffalo.

JAMES C. DOZIER, First Lieutenant, Company G, 118th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Rock Hill, S. C.; born in Marion, S. C.

DANIEL R. EDWARDS, Private, first class, Company C, 3d Machine Gun Battalion, 1st Division; residence, Bruceville, Tex.; born in Moorville, Tex.

ALAN LOUIS EGGERS, Sergeant, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division; residence, Summit, N. J.; born in Saranac Lake, N. Y.

MICHAEL B. ELLIS, Sergeant, Company C, 28th Infantry, 1st Division; residence, East St. Louis, Ill.; born in St. Louis, Mo.

ARTHUR J. FORREST, Sergeant, Company D, 354th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Hannibal, Mo.; born in St. Louis, Mo.

GARY EVANS FOSTER, Sergeant, Company F, 118th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Inman, S. C.; born in Spartanburg, S. C.

JESSE N. FUNK, Private, first class, Company L, 354th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Calhan, Colo.; born in New Hampton, Mo.

HAROLD A. FURLONG, First Lieutenant, 353d Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Detroit; born in Pontiac, Mich.

FRANK GAFFNEY, Private, first class, Company G, 108th Infantry, 27th Division; residence, Niagara Falls, N. Y.; born in Buffalo.

EARL D. GREGORY, Sergeant, Headquarters Company, 116th Infantry, 29th Division; residence, Chase City, Va.; born in Chase City.

SYDNEY G. GUMPERTZ, First Sergeant, Company E, 132d Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Chicago; born in San Raphael, Calif.

M. WALDO HATLER, Sergeant, Company B, 356th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Neosho, Mo.; born in Bolivar, Mo.

GEORGE PRICE HAYS, First Lieutenant, 10th Field Artillery, 3d Division; residence, Okarche, Okla.; born in China.

RALYN HILL, Corporal, Company H, 129th Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Oregon, Ill.; born in Lindenwood, Ill.

RICHMOND H. HILTON, Sergeant, Company M, 118th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Westville, S. C.; born in Westville.

CHARLES F. HOFFMAN, Gunnery Sergeant, 49th Company, 5th Regiment U. S. Marine Corps, 2d Division; residence, Brooklyn; born in New York.

NELSON M. HOLDERMAN, Captain, 307th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Santa Ana, Calif.; born in Trumbell, Nebr.

HAROLD I. JOHNSTON, Private, first class, Company A, 356th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Chicago; born in Kendell, Kans.

JAMES E. KARNES, Sergeant, Company D, 117th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Knoxville, Tenn.; born in Arlington, Tenn.

PHILIP C. KATZ, Sergeant, Company C, 363d Infantry,

91st Division; residence, San Francisco; born in San Francisco.

BENJAMIN KAUFMAN, First Sergeant, Company K, 308th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Brooklyn; born in Buffalo.

JOHN JOSEPH KELLY, Private, 78th Company, 6th Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, 2d Division; residence, Chicago; born in Chicago.

JOHN CRIDLAND LATHAM, Sergeant, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division; residence, Rutherford, N. J.; born in England.

BERGER LOMAN, Private, Company H, 132d Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Chicago; born in Norway.

GEORGE G. MCMURTRY, Captain, 308th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, New York; born in Pittsburgh.

GEORGE H. MALLON, Captain, 132d Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Minneapolis; born in Ogden, Kans.

SIDNEY E. MANNING, Corporal, Company G, 167th Infantry, 42d Division; residence, Flomaton, Ala.; born in Butler County, Ala.

WARDLAW L. MILES, Captain, 308th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Princeton, N. J.; born in Baltimore, Md.

STERLING MORELOCK, Private, Company M, 28th Infantry, 1st Division; residence, Oquawka, Ill.; born in Silver Run, Md.

THOMAS C. NEIBAUR, Private, Company M, 167th Infantry, 42d Division; residence, Sugar City, Idaho; born in Sharon, Idaho.

RICHARD W. O'NEILL, Sergeant, Company D, 165th Infantry, 42d Division; residence, New York; born in New York.

ARCHIE A. PECK, Private, Company A, 307th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Hornell, N. Y.; born in Tyrone, N. Y.

THOMAS A. POPE, Corporal, Company E, 131st Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Chicago; born in Chicago.

PATRICK REGAN, Second Lieutenant, 115th Infantry, 29th Division; residence, Los Angeles; born in Middleboro, Mass.

GEORGE S. ROBB, First Lieutenant, 369th Infantry, 93d Division; residence, Salina, Kans.; born in Assaria, Kans.

SAMUEL M. SAMPLER, Corporal, Company H, 142d Infantry, 36th Division; residence, Altus, Okla.; born in Decatur, Tex.

WILLIE SANDLIN, Sergeant, Company A, 132d Infantry, 33d Division; residence, Hyden, Ky.; born in Jackson, Ky.

DWITE H. SCHAFFNER, First Lieutenant, 306th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Falls Creek, Pa.; born in Arroya, Pa.

LLOYD M. SEIBERT, Sergeant, Company F, 364th Infantry, 91st Division; residence, Salinas, Calif.; born in Caledonia, Mich.

CLAYTON K. SLACK, Private, Company D, 124th Machine Gun Battalion, 33d Division; residence, Madison, Wis.; born in Plover, Wis.

EDWARD R. TALLEY, Sergeant, Company L, 117th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Russellville, Tenn.; born in Russellville.

JOSEPH H. THOMPSON, Major, 110th Infantry, 28th Division; residence, Beaver Falls, Pa.; born in Ireland.

HAROLD L. TURNER, Corporal, Company F, 142d Infantry, 36th Division; residence, Seminole, Okla.; born in Aurora, Mo.

LUDOVICUS M. M. VAN IERSEL, Sergeant, Company M, 9th Infantry, 2d Division; residence, Glen Rock, N. J.; born in Holland.

JOHN C. VILLEPIGUE, Corporal, Company M, 118th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Camden, S. C.; born in Camden.

REIDAR WAALER, Sergeant, Company A, 105th Machine-Gun Battalion, 27th Division; residence, New York; born in Norway.

CALVIN JOHN WARD, Private, Company D, 117th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Morristown, Tenn.; born in Green County, Tenn.

CHESTER H. WEST, First Sergeant, Company D, 363d Infantry, 91st Division; residence, Los Banos, Calif.; born in Fort Collins, Colo.

CHARLES W. WHITTLESEY, Major, 308th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Pittsfield, Mass.; born in Florence, Wis.

SAMUEL WOODFILL, First Lieutenant, 60th Infantry, 5th Division; residence, Bryantsburg, Ind.; born in Jefferson County, Ind.

ALVIN C. YORK, Corporal, Company G, 328th Infantry, 82d Division; residence, Pall Mall, Tenn.; born in Fentress County, Tenn.

Posthumous Awards

ALBERT E. BAESEL, Second Lieutenant, 148th Infantry, 37th Division; residence, Berea, Ohio; born in Berea.

DAVID B. BARKELEY, Private, Company E, 356th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, San Antonio, Tex.; born in Laredo, Tex.

ROBERT L. BLACKWELL, Private, Company K, 119th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Hurdle Mills, N. C.; born in Person, N. Dak.

ERWIN R. BLECKLEY, Second Lieutenant, 130th Field Artillery, observer 50th Aero Squadron, Air Service; residence, Wichita, Kans.; born in Wichita, Kans.

MARCELLUS H. CHILES, Captain, 356th Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Denver, Colo.; born in Eureka Springs, Ark.

WILBUR E. COLYER, Sergeant, Company A, 1st Engineers, 1st Division; residence, South Ozone, Long Island, N. Y.; born in Brooklyn.

HENRY G. COSTIN, Private, Company H, 115th Infantry, 29th Division; residence, Baltimore; born in Baltimore.

GEORGE DILBOY, Private, first class, Company H, 103d Infantry, 26th Division; residence, Keene, N. H.; born in Greece.

PARKER F. DUNN, Private, first class, Company A, 312th Infantry, 78th Division; residence, Albany, N. Y.; born in Albany.

HAROLD ERNEST GOETTLER, First Lieutenant, pilot, 50th Aero Squadron, Air Service; residence, Chicago; born in Chicago.

THOMAS LEE HALL, Sergeant, Company G, 118th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Fort Mill, S. C.; born in Fort Mill.

MATEJ KOCAK, Sergeant, 66th Company, 5th Regiment,

U. S. Marine Corps, 2d Division; residence, New York; born in Austria.

MILO LEMERT, First Sergeant, Company G, 119th Infantry, 30th Division; residence, Crossville, Tenn.; born in Marshalltown, Iowa.

FRANK LUKE, JR., Second Lieutenant, 27th Aero Squadron, 1st Pursuit Group, Air Service; residence, Phoenix, Ariz.; born in Phoenix.

JAMES I. MESTROVITCH, Sergeant, Company C, 111th Infantry, 28th Division; residence, Pittsburgh; born in Montenegro.

OSCAR F. MILLER, Major, 361st Infantry, 91st Division; residence, Los Angeles; born in Franklin County, Ark.

THOMAS E. O'SHEA, Corporal, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division; residence, Summit, N. J.; born in New York.

MICHAEL J. PERKINS, Private, first class, Company D, 101st Infantry, 26th Division; residence, Boston; born in Boston.

EMORY J. PIKE, Lieutenant Colonel, division machine-gun officer, 82d Division; residence, Cuba; born in Columbus City, Iowa.

JOHN H. PRUITT, Corporal, 78th Company, 6th Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, 2d Division; residence, Tucson, Ariz.; born in Sadeville, Ark.

HAROLD W. ROBERTS, Corporal, Company A, 344th Battalion, Tank Corps; residence, San Francisco; born in San Francisco.

WILLIAM SAWELSON, Sergeant, Company M, 312th Infantry, 78th Division; residence, Harrison, N. J.; born in Newark, N. J.

ALEXANDER R. SKINKER, Captain, 138th Infantry, 35th Division; residence, St. Louis, Mo.; born in St. Louis.

FRED E. SMITH, Lieutenant Colonel, 308th Infantry, 77th Division; residence, Bartlett, N. Dak.; born in Rockford, Ill.

WILLIAM B. TURNER, First Lieutenant, 105th Infantry, 27th Division; residence, Garden City, N. Y.; born in Boston.

J. HUNTER WICKERSHAM, Second Lieutenant, 353d Infantry, 89th Division; residence, Denver, Colo.; born in New York.

NELS WOLD, Private, Company I, 138th Infantry, 35th Division; residence, Minnewaukan, N. Dak.; born in Winger, Minn.

AND

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

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MEDALS OF HONOR

From an Act of Congress, Approved July 9, 1918: "The President is authorized to present, in the name of Congress, a medal of honor only to each person who, while an officer or enlisted man of the Army, shall hereafter, in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity *at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.*"

Private Daniel R. Edwards

PRIVATE EDWARDS

The Citation

Edwards, Daniel R., Private, First Class, Company C, 3d Machine Gun Battalion, 1st Division. Near Soissons, France, July 18, 1918. Reporting for duty from the hospital where he had been for several weeks under treatment for numerous and serious wounds, and although suffering intense pain from a shattered arm he crawled alone into an enemy trench for the purpose of capturing or killing enemy soldiers known to be concealed therein. He killed four of the men and took the remaining four men prisoners; while conducting them to the rear, one of the enemy was killed by a high explosive enemy shell which also completely shattered one of Private Edwards's legs, causing him to be immediately evacuated to the hospital. The bravery of Private Edwards, now a tradition in his battalion because of his previous gallant acts, again caused the morale of his comrades to be raised to a high pitch.—General Order No. 14, War Department, 1923. Award of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

WHEN, on April 6, 1917, this country declared war on Germany, a young man named Dan Edwards—or Daniel R. Edwards—who was punching cows on his father's cattle ranch up in Coleman County, Texas, turned his pony's nose and rode forty miles to Abilene to take a train to Waco, where he enlisted in the Nineteenth Infantry of the regular army.

He had already done a hitch in that army a few years before. At the age of fourteen (his mother had died when he was nine, and he was a pretty wild young Indian, he tells me) he had rebelled at the idea of going to High School. Instead he had prevailed upon his father to send him to an older brother's cattle ranch in Coleman County.

There he punched cows for two years, beginning what might be called the pre-war period of his life, which proved to be one a bit hazy and confused, with no fixed guiding star. "I know now that I had brain cells in my head in those days," he says. "But I sure wasn't using them!"

For two years he rides the range, then suddenly

we find him attending a certain little college in a certain little town of Texas. How had he ever climbed into college without going to High School? I asked him that, and his answer was vague. He explained—as though that could be an explanation—that he was halfback on the football team of that college. He must have been a good halfback.

After this studious interlude he punches cows once more. Then he goes to New York. To Coney Island, to be precise. Helping run a Punch-and-Judy show. When he told me of this episode, his eyes shone. He had a good time in that pre-war New York; he knew the old Haymarket. For he is of the vital, jovial type, is Daniel R. Edwards, and does not believe in over-checking, torturing or warping the senses and instincts given him by Mother Nature. From Coney Island he leaps back into the wide west. He manages one of his father's cattle ranches. But he meets a fellow named Rube Smith at Fort Sam Houston and this fellow Rube Smith is a private in the Nineteenth Infantry of the U. S. Army. Dan enlists in the Nineteenth Infantry of the U. S. Army.

He goes to the Philippines, he is on the border, he is at Vera Cruz. He is discharged in 1914 and

placed in the reserve as a sergeant of Company D, Nineteenth Infantry.

Back to cattle-ranching. But one night, in some vague way, he finds himself in Matamoras, Mexico, cleaned out after a long poker game. He yields to the blandishments of a Mexican military chieftain and becomes a colonel of cavalry. At the head of a swirl of ragged bravos he raids towns. But he is captured by the Federals, and finds himself with a cannon ball tied to one leg, doing time in a salt mine—out of which he escapes disguised as a sack of salt on the back of a mule.

This is the young man who in 1917 enlists upon news of the declaration of war. Remembering the great enthusiasms of those days, I was curious. "Just why did you enlist?" I asked him. "Was it patriotism, or was it love of adventure?"

He considered a moment. "No," he said; "I never could work up much of that patriotism stuff."

"Adventure, then," I said.

"Naw-aw," he denied, just a bit indignant.

He waxed confidential. "You see," he said, "I figured they'd get me anyhow. But if I enlisted in my old outfit, it would count as a reënlistment—

and I'd get more pay. Thirty-one dollars instead of twenty-two!

"A lot of the cow-punchers *didn't* know why they enlisted," he went on, establishing a distinction. "There was Rufe Brown, who joined up with his Sunday-best pearl-handled revolver in his belt. He couldn't understand why he shouldn't keep it. When they had taken it away from him, he came to me for consolation. 'Say, Dan,' he said, 'who in hell *are* we in war with, anyway?'

"I said it was with Germany.

" 'Hell!' said Rufe, 'I thought it was still that war with Mexico!' "

A few days after his reënlistment Sergeant Daniel R. Edwards became a private.

"How was that?" I asked.

"Busted," he said. "Reduced to the ranks."

"But why?"

"Imbibing too well and not too wisely," he said briskly.

"That was the fifth time," he explained. "All the time I was in the army, I kept being sergeant, then private, sergeant, then private."

He was transferred to the Twenty-sixth Infantry, then recruiting to war strength at San Benido; his company, with others, was made into the first

brigade machine gun battalion, and he thus automatically joined the famous suicide club. On June 26, 1917, he landed at Saint Nazaire, France, and rolled for four days in a box car, together with eight mules, into the training area, at Dumange-aux-Eaux, which everybody, he says, called Doomange Ox Ox.

§

A year later, as a novel would say it, a very bored young man stood in the park of a château, directing a force of equally bored young men in the digging of trenches. These were not war trenches but drainage trenches, and the château was a field hospital well back from the fighting area. The bored young man limped a bit, and saw only out of one eye. Also he had been marked S.C.D.—Surgical Certificate of Disability—with no future before him but to be used around that hospital a little longer and then be sent home.

The bored young man was Daniel R. Edwards, once of Coleman County, Texas.

But how had he, in one year, reached this position of digging drains in the grounds of a field hospital?

Well, for one thing, he had got himself, at Cantigny, two machine gun wounds in the head, a

machine gun bullet in the right knee (it is still there), four bayonet cuts in various parts of the body—and the Distinguished Service Cross.

Here is the citation, in dry military verbiage:

"DANIEL R. EDWARDS (Army Serial No. 106546) private, first class, Company C. Third Machine Gun Battalion, First Division. For extraordinary heroism in action at Cantigny, France, May 28-30, 1918. Serving as gunner of his machine gun squad, he advanced with the first assault line of the infantry, and while passing through the village of Cantigny at 5:30 A.M. May 18, carrying his machine gun on his shoulder, he was attacked by an enemy soldier and bayoneted, receiving a severe wrist wound; the enemy soldier was killed by an infantryman. Continuing in the advance beyond Cantigny and meeting intense enemy fire, the attacking wave was halted. Private Edwards, with his squad, remained in an advanced position, protecting with his fire the infantry which had fallen back to a more advantageous position and were retrenching. While thus engaged the machine gunners repulsed two determined enemy counter-attacks, during which the three members of the squad accompanying Private Edwards were

killed and he himself severely wounded. Despite these wounds, which he himself dressed, he remained alone in his position throughout the day, firing whenever a target offered, withstanding attacks by liquid fire and machine-gun fire; he refused to be evacuated and continued to operate his gun until nightfall, when his company was relieved. His extraordinary bravery and devotion to duty, his fortitude and undaunted determination despite his numerous and painful wounds, incited the men of his battalion to splendid endeavors and raised their morale to an extremely high pitch. Residence at enlistment: Bruceville, Texas."

Before this, however, other little things had happened to him, as witness this citation:

"Paragraph No. 22 G. O. October 28, 1917.

"Daniel R. Edwards, No. 106546, Sergeant Co. C., 2nd Brigade, M. G.

"The above-named non-commissioned officer is awarded the Croix de Guerre for gallantry in face of the enemy near Aricourt on the night of October 2, 1917."

As witness also this one:

"Regimental Order No. 312, November 12, 1917.

"Daniel R. Edwards, No. 106546, Private.

"The above-named enlisted man, while on detached duty with the French Army near Asne Moi, and though attached for the purpose of receiving instruction from the French troops, voluntarily left his position of safety in the trench and went into an area being shelled by the enemy and aided a French comrade back to the line who had been blinded by the explosion of a shell. The French high command has awarded Private Edwards with the Medaille Militaire."

Note that between the Croix de Guerre citation and the Medaille Militaire citation, only fourteen days have elapsed. Note also that when Dan gets the Croix de Guerre he is a sergeant, and that when fourteen days later he gets the Medaille Militaire he is a buck private. "How did you get busted this time?" I asked.

"Same old way," he said cheerily. "Imbibing too deeply and not too wisely."

Then I tried to find out from him just what it was, whether in his physique or in his soul, which made him fight that way—in such a way as to get him within one short year, a Croix de Guerre, a Medaille Militaire, and a Distinguished Service Cross.

"It's just self-preservation," he said.

"Go on, go on!" I twitted, "how can it be just self-preservation?"

"Well, it is," he said stoutly. "For instance, that bayoneting at Cantigny."

It seems that the citation hasn't got that bayoneting of Private Daniel R. Edwards just right. It seems that it really happened late in the afternoon of that busy day, as Private Edwards worked his machine gun in the infantry first line, and the Germans furiously tried to push home their third counter-attack. Private Edwards, astride his tripod, was industriously sprinkling the swarming space before him, when the bayoneting German came out of nowhere, and, before Private Edwards knew it, had sunk his sticker thrice into Private Edwards.

"I rolled from the machine gun and away from him—just one roll," Dan now says.

He avers that he was ready to give up, that his roll was really a surrender.

But that roll, away from the sharp point, had slightly altered the situation. For the fraction of a second it had taken Dan Edwards a few inches beyond the reach of the next prod. At the same time,

by the merest chance (so he calls it), it had slapped his right hand up against the holster of his automatic pistol.

The hand accepted the hint. It seized the automatic, it pressed three times—and the bayoneter went down, almost cut in two.

"That soldier," says Private Edwards reminiscently, "went down with a look of great disappointment on his face. One moment he was seeing himself with the Iron Cross; the next moment he was seeing himself dead.

"And," he added, "you can judge for yourself: it is all a matter of self-preservation."

He is a hard man to argue with, is Dan Edwards. We will go on and tell of his next feat of self-preservation, the one which, after the Croix de Guerre, the Medaille Militaire, and the distinguished service cross, got him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

§

He was, on July 10, 1918, directing the digging of drainage trenches on the grounds of a field hospital. A machine gun bullet wound in the right knee, four bayonet cuts in his tummie, two machine bullet wounds in the face, were about healed,

but he had been set down S.C.D. and was very much bored. So bored was he that somewhere around two o'clock in the afternoon he found himself walking out of the hospital. He jumped a truck, he jumped a train, he hitch-hiked across a slice of France, and at Froissy walked in on his old outfit, Company C of the Third Machine Gun Battalion of the First Division.

His captain greeted him with surprise. "Why, papers have come through showing you've been set down as S.C.D., due for home!"

Private Daniel R. Edwards composed his face into the appropriate idiotic mask and said, "Well, at the hospital they told me to report here as fit for duty."

The captain contemplated him quite a while.

"All right," he said. "Go back to your place."

And Daniel Edwards went back to his place—among his old comrades.

The fourteenth of July, the French National holiday, was near and was to be celebrated in Paris by a parade of Allied soldiers. When Company C chose its quota, Private Edwards was one of those detailed to march on that day down the Champs Élysées.

So on the night of July thirteen Dan landed

in Paris—and that was the beginning of what might be called a Long Day.

First of all he did not go to bed that night. He was taking in the Ville Lumière; he was taking it in thoroughly, in width and breadth and depth.

With dawn came report and inspection, followed by the grand march down the Champs Élysées, during which, Dan says, he got very tired because his commandant, "little" Teddy Roosevelt, forgot and let them carry arms on their right shoulders for two hours straight.

With nightfall Dan resumed his study of the Ville Lumière—he is still enthusiastic over the discoveries made that night—then, when he returned to the American camp on the Longchamps racetrack in the morning, tumbled head-first into a great crap game.

At noon Dan, after many palpitating ups and downs, some of which had peaked toward great wealth, was cleaned out. He was just about deciding to have a little snooze, because this fifteenth of July was supposed to be a day of rest, when abruptly the fifteenth ceased to be a day of rest. Suddenly everyone was being bundled off into camions, into trains, to rejoin outfits.

Dan rolled and rolled in a fearfully crowded

quarante-hommes-and-huit-cheveaux and did not sleep, and reached his outfit on the morning of July 17. It was just marching off.

All day he marched, merged in his outfit, under a low gray concealing sky, by small hidden roads, through woods, up and down dale, a terrific forced march with few halts, with only snatches at food. The sun set, night came, he still marched. They were in a big forest now and it was raining. They went on blindly, and all about them in the night was the vast rumor of a whole army on the march.

At last, at four-twenty in the morning, a halt was called. A singular quantity of artillery seemed to be about, and Dan, knowing that artillery is usually fairly well back from the front line, lit a cigarette. He took one puff, and then heard his lieutenant say, "All right, fellows. We're going over."

The artillery burst into sound, and within two minutes Dan, carrying his machine gun, was stepping over German trenches. What was taking place about him was the battle of Soissons.

There were twelve men to his machine-gun piece. Dan was the gunner, the man who actually shoots with the piece, the one who might be considered as having all the fun. But the gunner, besides shooting

the gun, is supposed to carry it to the various spots from which it is shot. Dan, moving with the infantry's first wave through the torn haze of morning behind the barrage's crepitating wall, was carrying across his shoulder the Hotchkiss, which weighed about eighty pounds. Behind him was his loader, bearing the tripod, which weighed about the same; the assistant loader with the traverse, which goes between tripod and piece; the mechanic with extra parts and tools; and then the ammunition carriers, laden down with cases of ammunition like traveling salesmen.

The advance of a machine gun crew is a thing of toil and effort, of weariness and sweat, of enormous patience and persistence focused toward the getting of oneself deeper and deeper into Hell.

At first the crew were going through a tangle of barbed wire and trench and sap. There was not much to do, in this confused bedlam, for the machine gun, but there was for the machine gunners. Swirls of the enemy made for them now and then. Machine gunners bear no rifles; they used their automatics. It was pistol fighting, almost eye to eye.

Then the trenches were passed, and their work

regulated itself. The order was to set up the gun and use it whenever any group of fifteen or more of the enemy was in sight. So they plodded doggedly beneath their heavy burdens, up hill and down dale, under shell fire, in a murk of haze and smoke, with men vaguely to their left and men vaguely to their right; and every now and then, plunk, the loader set his tripod down, the assistant loader slapped upon it the traverse, Dan slid out upon it the Hotchkiss. He straddled the tripod, he sighted along the barrel—and pr-pr-rrr, pr-pr-rrr, pr-r-r, some shovel-hatted group dissolved over there in the haze and the smoke.

Then to his shoulder again went the heavy burden; the assistant loader took up the traverse, the loader hauled up his tripod, the mechanic picked up his burden of extra barrels, parts, and tools, the carriers took up their cases of ammunition; and on they went, bent low, stumbling among shell holes, up the little hills, down into ravines and across, slowly, slowly, stubbornly, sweating, sobbing, always forward.

Little by little in the smoke, the haze, the confusion, the uproar, Gunner Edward's crew was dwindling. Babcock had been killed early. Collins and Rich had vanished. Alexander, the assistant

loader, wounded by a shell, had been finished by the automatic of a crazed German officer before they could get up to him to help.

On they went through the morning. Advancing one kilometer, dropping; advancing twenty-five yards, dropping; advancing a few feet, dropping; stopping now and then to get the tag of some dead boy, or to help a wounded one, or to send a group of kamerading prisoners loping toward the rear. And the small group dwindling, dwindling.

By noon Dan Edwards, still doggedly going forward, was the last left of the piece crew. He had no loader or assistant loader, and hence no tripod or traverse. Along with his gun he was carrying an auxiliary tripod, a short one without traverse, which meant that, whenever he set the gun down and shot with it, it was without any cushioning swivel to take up the recoil, but with all of its brutal kick square against his shoulder. He had no mechanic, and hence himself was carrying the few spare parts and tools he had judged indispensable when the rest had been left behind. Infantrymen, impressed by him as he went along, followed him with his diminishing store of ammunition.

It was shortly after noon that he fell in with the red-headed lieutenant. The two men found

themselves in the same shell hole, and Edwards told the red-headed lieutenant of his difficulties.

The red-headed lieutenant displayed immediate interest. He knew how to load a machine gun. "I'll go along with you," he proposed. "I can act as your loader and lead my platoon at the same time."

Edwards accepted, and they sealed the compact over a flask of tafia rum which Dan (always a forward-looking lad) had been carrying all morning but as yet had had no time to broach. This put them in fine fettle, and when the advance was resumed they stepped out of the hole as the gun's entire crew, with the exception of a few infantrymen that tagged along carrying ammunition.

To this day Dan Edwards glows when he speaks of the lieutenant, of that red-headed boy. Of his gay and reckless valor, of his comradeship under fire, of his resourcefulness—and of his conviviality. The flask they carried was soon drained. But they were finding others as they advanced. Flasks of Germans, flasks of Moroccans, flasks of Frenchmen —they sampled all as they advanced deeper into the battle's inferno, their spirits rising and rising as they went, to the mingled headiness of alcohol, peril and contempt of death.

Late in the afternoon there was another halt in

the advance, and an attempt made to consolidate a position for the night. To Edwards, in a shell hole with the red-headed lieutenant, a runner came ordering the machine gun forward of the line to establish a strong point. The red-headed lieutenant crawled away. He came sliding back after a little while. "The old man says I can go with you," he reported. He had been to get his captain's permission.

So the two made their preparations and dined together in the hole. They had a little monkey meat. Out of a German knapsack they got some cooked beans and a hunk of bread. When they went to eat the bread, however, they found that it was saddle-soap.

At dusk the two set out. Edwards carried the machine gun, the auxiliary tripod, two belts of ammunition, and the tools and spare parts, which he had reduced to one change barrel, a gas-chamber wrench, a piece of jimmy wire in case of a jam, a couple of more wrenches. The red-headed lieutenant cheerfully went along, laden with two boxes of clip ammunition.

They crawled out of their hole, laden like slugs, and on across the face of No Man's Land, flattened along the contour of the ground, stopping as if dead whenever a flare lit up the ground with its

white glare. When they began to hear German voices they decided they had gone far enough, chose a suitable shell hole, and set up their gun. They were about a hundred and fifty yards ahead of the infantry's front line.

That was another sleepless night (count them) of Dan Edwards' long day. Patrols were crawling to and fro constantly, from both sides. Now and then they clashed; shots rang out; the two machine gunners glimpsed shadow forms in confused fighting—so confused they dared not take part for fear of turning their deadly sprinkle upon their own comrades. At midnight a runner came crawling to the lip of their hole, slid his order down into it—"Keep on the alert"—and crawled away again.

Thus the night passed. The sky grew green with dawn; finally it was daylight. "I'm going to see where the hell we are," the red-headed lieutenant said.

"Better keep your bean down," Edwards said.

"Bean? They can't hit the side of a barn!"

The red-headed lieutenant raised his eyes above the lip of the hole—and a bullet struck him fair between them.

One look told Edwards there was nothing to do —except the small sacred things one does in such a

case—if one has the time. He laid the friend and fighting comrade of a few hours along the bottom of the shell hole, scratched up a little earth, and on the low mound placed kit, helmet, and mask.

Daniel Edwards, who had set forth with a crew of twelve men, was now alone. He still considered himself a machine gun piece, however, with work to do, for after a while he got his head behind a big bowlder and peered out over the face of the land. What he saw was interesting. Not more than fifty yards away, behind a hedge along a farm road, a body of Germans—a battalion, he judged—was forming for a counter-attack.

He studied the ground, and off to the left of the Germans, about fifty yards from him and forward, he saw a sort of rise, the remains of an old parapet. If he could get over there with his machine gun, he would have the Germans enfiladed—and there would be no counter-attack.

But he was alone. His preparations must be flawless. He must reach that small fort over there—if he reached it—with everything needed, and ready to shoot.

He strapped a box of belt ammunition over each shoulder. The belt which was over his right shoulder he engaged into the Hotchkiss, all ready to feed into

it. He shouldered the gun, took up the auxiliary tripod and one extra gun-barrel, and set out.

"How did you go? Walk?" I said a-gape, when he got to this point of his story.

"Walk?" he cried indignantly. "I ran like a bastard!

"I ran like a bastard," he said, "with the entire German army shooting everything it had at me!

"You see," he added confidentially, "I'd had another little nip before starting."

Well, carrying the big Hotchkiss, the two belts of ammunition, the tripod, the extra barrel and tools, his gas mask, his automatic, his bolo (machine gunners had bolos) he must have run indeed like his criterion of a good runner; for with the entire German army shooting everything it had at him, he reached his objective, the little mound he had seen from his shell hole. But it was not a little mound. He found now as he neared that it was the intersection of two old abandoned trenches. He reached this intersection, paused for an instant to throw the extra barrel in ahead of him, and just then a shell hit his gun.

"A shell hit my gun." That is the way he says it. And the gun was on his shoulder.

Whether an entire shell hit the gun, or just a

piece of shell, I don't know. Anyhow, it was enough. Rear over kettle Dan went into the trench, a few yards from the intersection, his ears aroar, a great pain in his neck.

He says he did not lose consciousness, and I believe this. Knowing him now, I am certain that there lies within his thick-set, resilient body some extraordinary power of resistance. The force of the blow he had received may be measured from the fact that the heavy Hotchkiss had been destroyed on his very shoulder. He felt in a sort of nightmare, but this nightmare, he insists now, consisted mostly of pain in neck and a great ringing in ears.

When the ringing had abated somewhat—and he says this was in a short time—he proceeded to take stock of the situation. The machine gun lay broken by his side, but his automatic was intact in its holster, as was also his bolo in its scabbard. He started to move, and found he could not. His right arm was caught between the wall of the trench and a trellis built against it.

He pulled at the arm; he could not free it. Then looking closer he saw that there was not much use freeing it. That part of the arm—the forearm—which was caught between trellis and

wall had been shattered by the shell or fragment which had destroyed the Hotchkiss on his shoulder. Through the trellis he could see it clearly—a mere rag of a forearm—no good at all.

At the same time he heard German commands on the plain above; he imagined he heard an answering rush of men. He surmised that the command had to do with him, that the rush of men was toward him. Taking off his woven belt, he wrapped it and wrapped it around the biceps of the imprisoned arm, using the buckle as turning stick to make a tourniquet. Then with his bolo—which, he says, he always kept very sharp—he parted himself from the maimed and imprisoned forearm.

"It was just holding on by a little skin," he said to have me understand that the cutting off of one's own arm need not be necessarily a feat of great difficulty.

He then raised his head above the trench, and saw that his apprehensions were correct. They were coming for him. Along the trench which ran vertically to the one into which he had been thrown he could see the tops of eight German helmets sliding toward him.

Taking his forty-five automatic pistol in the hand that was left him, the left, he crawled a few

yards to the point where the two trenches—his trench, and theirs—intersected. And waited quietly around the corner like a child playing hide-and-go-seek.

The thump of heavy steps neared; he heard the panting of the running men. Suddenly two debouched almost together into the chamber made by the meeting of the two trenches, and he killed both on the spot with two shots of the heavy caliber automatic held in his left hand. Then he stepped around the corner and killed the next two while they were still in the act of stopping in surprise before the abrupt collapse of their leaders. And now, behind the four bodies heaped there, the remaining Germans, still in file, raised their hands in surrender.

He decided to take these four back with him as prisoners. Keeping them covered—coated with earth and blood, he must have looked to them like the very Fiend—he made them throw down their guns, then started them ahead of him down the trench which roughly led toward his own lines, about two hundred yards back. But first he stopped for a moment to take a singular precaution.

"I happened to think"—this is the way he told it to me—"that the stump of my arm might look like

a self-inflicted wound, which, in a way, it was. You know how sometimes some boy would wound himself to get back to the rear. Being a bit of an old sea lawyer, and knowing how queerly the army regulations work sometimes, I decided to take along some bit of a proof of what really had happened."

"What did you do?" I cried, already a bit aghast with premonition.

"I made one of the Germans take the rest of my arm along in his knapsack."

His way back toward the lines with his four prisoners he does not remember very well. He is certain that he was perfectly conscious, but we can debit him with a moderate degree of delirium. He says, however, that his arm wasn't really hurting much, and that the tourniquet was working very well, so that he wasn't losing much blood—"not to amount to anything." The strange party—the four Germans, one of whom was a perfect giant of a man, ahead; Dan, a bloody apparition, behind, threatening automatic in left hand—filed along the old trench till it pinched out and they rose to cross the American front line. Dan remembers faint cheers in the battle uproar, coming from funk hole and shell hole as he passed. They went on. They passed the second line, then were among the sup-

ports. They came to artillery; Dan knew now he was near the end of his long day, that soon he would find what he was seeking—a place where he could deliver his prisoners, and have his wound dressed, and go to sleep.

They came upon a wide field. About two hundred yards away some green camouflage gave promise of a dugout, of a first aid station, perhaps. They made for this, the Germans willingly plodding, Dan beginning to feel tired now that care and rest were near.

Then they heard a big shell coming from the depths in the east. Down they went as the gentle whistling abruptly grew into a shriek. There was a tremendous explosion: Dan felt himself lifted up, then thrown down. When he started to rise, he found that his left leg had been utterly shattered.

One might think he would have given up then, the fates altogether too determinedly against him. Or that, even with spirit still undaunted, weakness of flesh might have conquered him. Nothing like that happened. He still had his automatic, his will power, the stubbornness of his body. One of his four prisoners had been blown to atoms by the explosion, but the other three were intact. He raised his gun and covered them.

They had no thought of taking advantage of this further catastrophe; they were more shaken than he. The big one of the three, a giant, altogether unmanned, in an agony of humility and surrender, threw himself on his captor and made the gesture of kissing the service ribbons—soiled and muddied—that ran across his chest; and rough-neck Dan, not understanding the movement, or in revulsion at the exaggerated sentimentality of it, let him have the butt of the gun between the eyes.

Dan does not tell of this boastfully, but with a sort of shocked astonishment at what was probably a mere reflex, in which the mind entered little. As it was, the left-handed tap of the mangled captor knocked the big prisoner out, clean.

The captive came to groggily. Dan ordered him and his fellows to dress his new wound, and this was done in the open field, under a desultory fire. The Germans had good field kits; Dan says now, with a touch of tenderness, that they made a good job of it. After the dressing, they contrived a splint. They got a steel barbed-wire support, they found a plank. They placed the steel support under the leg, the board above, and, winding bandage round and round, tied support, board and leg in one.

The four now started once more on their way.

Dan had the stump of his right arm around one prisoner's neck, his left arm, ending in the automatic, circled a second prisoner's neck; the third prisoner, walking backward, carried Dan's leg. Dan says now that all this was extraordinarily funny. It was funny because he was pointing the way with his left hand, forgetting that his left hand held the automatic; so that the poor German, walking backward before him and carrying his leg, mistook each pointing gesture for a threat and a signal that his last moment had come.

The bit of green camouflage spotting the plain proved to be hiding a dugout, and the dugout proved to be a first aid station.

As the major in charge was about to shoot a syringeful of serum into Dan, the latter stopped him and demanded a receipt. A receipt for what? For four prisoners.

"But," the major objected, "there are only three standing there."

"The one who was blown up was my prisoner when he was blown up," said Dan. "He counts!"

The major gave Dan a receipt for four prisoners.

An ambulance drove up; Dan was placed on a stretcher to be slid into it.

"I had no sooner hit that stretcher," says Dan,

"than I fell asleep. You see, I had been up five nights."

Which is correct. One night in Paris before the parade, one night in Paris after the parade, one night in camion and freight car going to the front, one night marching to the take-off, one night in a shell hole after the take-off. Enough to make anyone sleepy.

§

Daniel R. Edwards is now a citizen of New York, where he settled after the war—or, rather, after the surgeons were through with him. He has taken a course in journalism at Columbia, he has done newspaper work, he has engaged in several publicity campaigns. Dabbling in business, he worked up a capital (I came near writing sergeantship) of several thousand dollars, then lost it. While I was extracting out of him the material for this article, he was acting as court receiver for a defunct wholesale lamp concern. We sat in an abandoned office, almost buried in dust, where I suppose for months someone had worried. And the open office door gaped upon a huge loft planted with a forest of lugubrious unlit lamps so ugly you felt like weeping.

But Dan was not worrying, nor was he weeping.

He roared, he slapped my thigh, as he told me tales of the war. Not tales such as here related, but tales of altogether another character. There is nothing in Dan of the meager acidulous Puritan. He eats, he drinks, he laughs, he loves—all this formidably; he is a bursting magazine of jolly relish in Life.

Now and then, though, his face comes to rest, and for a moment, beneath that jovial, laugh-wrinkled surface, a heavy iron mask appears.

"You really love to fight, don't you?" I ask.

"No-o-o!" He seems astonished at my question.

"Go on. Own up. You like to fight."

He thinks it over. "I don't mind a fight," he says guardedly, "if I've studied the situation first and feel pretty sure I've got a good chance to come out on top."

He is terribly maimed. His right arm stops at the elbow. His left leg, rebuilt under the flesh with steel plates, has no knee joint and is inches shorter than the right. Though his eyes seem normal, the optic nerve of the left one is gone. And minor scars he bears, and a machine-gun bullet imbedded near the right knee.

Is one aware of this when with him? Just for a moment, no more. That same quality which hurled him through the ordeal of ten years ago has sur-

mounted, since then, difficulties that would have made of the average man a gibbering neurotic. He has trained the five fingers of his left hand till they do anything which your ten can do: one gets an impression of adroitness from him, of ease and grace. His walk, in spite of his stiff leg, is a charging, headlong stagger; when he climbs stairs, he doesn't walk: he runs. I went out with him one night, and he danced all night. I went to his club one day; he plunged into the pool and sent his blunt powerful body foaming back and forth from end to end like a walrus. He is like a catamount on his feet, quick of reflexes; he doesn't seem a cripple, but a powerful athlete. All this because . . .

Well, because, of course, he is indomitable. And by this I do not mean only in the spirit; his flesh itself is unconquerable. It has, as it were, swarmed over the parts destroyed by shrapnel and jagged buzzing steel. It has mounted like a tide of life about them.

What is the secret of him? The secret of his—why not use the word?—of his heroism. I have tried to search his heart, with no wonderful result. Here is one of his explanations for what he is.

"You see," he says, "whenever I did one of these things I was scared to death."

"Well?" I prompted, feeling this was not the entire explanation.

"Well," he went on, consideringly, "I think that, when you get the proper combination of courage and of fear—with more fear than courage—*then* you're apt to have what Elinor Glyn or somebody has called It!"

Sergeant Sydney G. Gumpertz

SERGEANT GUMPERTZ

The Citation

Sydney G. Gumpertz, First Sergeant Company E, 132d Infantry, 33d Division. In the Bois de Forges, France, September 26, 1918, when the advancing line was held up by machine-gun fire, Sergeant Gumpertz left the platoon of which he was in command and started with two other soldiers through a heavy barrage toward the machine-gun nest. His two companions soon became casualties from bursting shells, but Sergeant Gumpertz continued on in the face of direct fire from the machine-gun, jumped into the nest, and silenced the gun, capturing nine of the crew.

IN the veins of the Jew, Sydney Gumpertz, runs the blood of trader and warrior. His grandfather crossed the plains in 1850. Along the placers of California, the camps up in the hills, the Dead Horse Gulches, the Hangman's Hills, the Poker Flats later to be immortalized by Bret Harte, he wandered on a wagon behind two mules, exchanging provisions, clothes and equipment for the shining dust. His son, Sydney's father, founded a general merchandise store in Stockton, within strik-

ing distance of the Mother Lode, and Sonora, Jimtown, and Angels' Camp. In Stockton Sydney spent his childhood.

But on his mother's side Sydney's great-grandfather, a Jew of Alsace, had fought all over Europe in Napoleon's guard.

When Sydney was fifteen he entered the Stockton High School. The boys there had a cadet corps of some sixty lovers of glory; they drilled with old Civil War muskets almost heavier than they. Sydney was elected sergeant of that outfit. A little later the family moved to New York. When Sydney was through with school he took up newspaper work, oscillating between reporting and the business staff. He was a bit of a vagabond; worked in Chicago, in Oregon and Washington, in San Francisco.

In 1913 his wanderings ceased to be aimless and became ardent pursuit. He had met Miss Anna Light, a charming actress on the vaudeville stage, and had got it into his head to make her his wife. Vaudeville circuiting offers remarkable opportunities to a young woman instinctively playing the old enchanting game. Miss Anna Light went flitting from city to city, but Sydney Gumpertz was always tenaciously in her wake. "I proposed to her

in at least twenty-four towns and cities," he now says. "I chased her all over the United States for two years. And then," he concludes humbly, "I guess she said yes simply because I had worn her out." At which the lady herself laughs, a bit tenderly, a bit mockingly.

In 1915 they were married; and one afternoon of July, 1917, they were standing together on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago, listening to a uniformed man speaking from a wagon. The country had been at war for several months.

Sydney's wife sensed something. "Do you want to go?" she said, turning her eyes up to him—he is a six-footer and she a little woman.

"Yes," he said. He was then thirty-eight years old. "But I'm married now; I must stay and take care of you."

"I'll work!" she cried. "I'll take care of myself, and you can go!"

The following day he went to the armory of the Second Illinois National Guard to enlist. But he couldn't; it was found that he was suffering from a hernia. On his insistence, Major Lavin looked him over again.

"We can operate so that you'll be fit," he decided.

"Go ahead," said Gumpertz.

The following morning, his little wife at his side, he reported at the hospital and was operated on, and was sworn in while still in bed. Then off he went to Camp Logan, Texas, with the Second Illinois, now become the 132d Infantry of the Thirty-third Division.

"Just why were you so anxious to enlist?" I asked him in his New York apartment more than eleven years later.

He looked at me a moment then said very simply, "Well—because I am a patriot. I don't know why," he apologized, "but I always have been."

He was still thinking about this. "I"—he hesitated—"well, I'm willing to give my life to my country. I would do it right now if I had to."

"But what about you?" I asked, turning to his wife. She was suffering from a cold, and had tried to remain in her room while I talked to him. But after a while this had become too hard on both of them. He had risen, gone into her room, there had been a whispered consultation, and he had come out with her, wrapped in a rose-hued quilt, and had laid her on the drawing-room sofa where he could see her as he talked and where she could hear what he said.

"How about you, Mrs. Gumpertz?" I repeated. She raised her head from her pillow and smiled. "I wouldn't have much use for any man what wouldn't fight for his country," she said.

Sydney Gumpertz went down to Texas where his division was training, and Anna Light Gumpertz went back to the stage. But not for long.

In the veins of Sydney Gumpertz runs the blood of the warrior, but also the blood of the trader. Down there at Camp Logan (at first he was in the headquarters company), he soon found that he could send in news to the Houston *Post* at six dollars a column, and to the Associated Press at eight dollars a column. Also the division was publishing a weekly. He bought four of the advertising pages of the divisional newspaper at fifty dollars apiece; then, going about among the Houston merchants, resold them for much more than fifty dollars apiece. And Anna Light Gumpertz left the vaudeville circuit and came down to Houston.

"I stopped at the best hotel, too!" she laughed, eleven years later.

The division was training hard. "*I'll* tell you we trained!" And one day Sydney was transferred and found himself First Sergeant of Company E of the 132d Infantry. There had been a general change

of officers in that company, and the new captain was George H. Mallon. He was a big, iron-fisted, square-jawed Irishman from Minnesota, with steel-blue eyes and a steel-blue will. The first sergeant and the captain, the Jew and the Irishman, looked at each other. After the war, they told each other of that first meeting.

"You looked good to me, Gumpertz," said Mallon.

"And you certainly looked good to me," said Gumpertz.

The Irish captain and the Jewish sergeant soon had the company, which had been a little hard to handle, in perfect shape. They were mostly boys from Iowa and Illinois, with a sprinkling from Chicago itself. May 5, 1918, they entrained for the Atlantic and France. And all trading stopped—newspaper correspondence, selling long in advertising pages, everything—and Anna Light Gumpertz went back to Chicago and to work.

"Did you work all the time he was away?" I asked.

She shook her head. "No," she said. "I worked till the war got too thick and too nervous—then I couldn't. All I could do was wait. I wrote to him

every day. Even if for weeks I did not hear from him. And I read the casualty lists every day—but I'd quickly skip all the G's."

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Landing in France in May, the Thirty-third Division was brigaded with the British, then busy reforming after the terrible blow which had come near to annihilating them two months before. They moved up before Albert in the Somme. Gumpertz remembers the shreds left here and there of dead men fallen months before and never buried.

On July 4 he was with a composite battalion which helped the Australians take Hamel. What he remembers best of that stiff fight is a deed of his captain, George Mallon. They were nearing a trench; Gumpertz's automatic was spitting, but Mallon was holding his idle in his hand. They came to a German officer, and Mallon, still disdaining his automatic, brought up a sharp left against the enemy jaw and knocked the German out.

Near by one of their boys, a Pole, was just about to stick his bayonet into two enemy soldiers down in the trench. "Wait a minute; they're mine," Mallon roared. "They're mine," protested the Pole.

Mallon leaped into the trench and felled the two Germans with the same fist that had done for their officer.

For just a moment the Pole stood, protestant and nonplussed. "Well, then, I'll go get me one of my own," he decided, and moved on with his bayonet.

"We had tough bayonets in our company," says Gumpertz proudly.

On August 8 the division took part in the big British drive which Ludendorff has since called Germany's black day, after which it was moved to the Saint Mihiel front, among its own people. Sergeant Gumpertz says the Saint Mihiel drive was nothing.

Then September 26 came and the Argonne drive, a battle which, continuing to November 11, 1918, finally brought the Central colossus to his knees.

§

Just before this, orders had come to the division that all Jewish soldiers should be given leave on the day of Yom Kippur, to go to Bar-le-Duc and attend services of their own church. "For the first time," says Gumpertz, "I claimed my rights as a Jew." He was looking forward to a nice little vacation, when suddenly all talk of leaves

ceased, and the division found itself going along the roads in night marches, hiding by day. On the night of the twenty-fifth of September his company was relieving French troops in trenches on a sinister hill called le Mort Homme. Dead Man's Hill—a name reminiscent of the Californian mining camps he had known when a boy. At two-thirty in the morning a tremendous assemblage of artillery began the "preparation." At five-thirty the "preparation" was over—and out of the trenches they scrambled and went forward toward the German positions.

Sergeant Gumpertz that day was taking charge of his company's fourth platoon, about fifty men. His whole regiment, the 131st, and also the 132d, were going over also, with the 129th and the 133d in support; and to his left eight divisions, on a front of nearly thirty miles, were also going over. But Sergeant Gumpertz was not concerned with that. His platoon was now his world.

The platoon scrambled out of the trenches and immediately stepped forward into a thick fog. Vaguely they felt other platoons to their right and left; they could not see them. Well they knew that behind the rolling barrage ahead the enemy was waiting, but they could not see him. Bullets came

out of the fog and went whispering through the fog; shells came out of the fog and burst in the fog. The task of Sergeant Gumpertz and his platoon, given them in the night, was a simple one. From le Mort Homme they were to go northward about three miles to a forest called Bois de Forges; then, turning a little to the right, go on to the banks of the river Meuse about two miles further.

So at five-thirty, in the early morning light, they set out in the thick fog behind the rolling barrage. Of that part of the operation Sergeant Gumpertz remembers especially the going over of Father John L. O'Donnel, regimental chaplain. The padre had been gassed a little while before; both his eyes were almost closed. But he stepped out of the trench and went along with his flock, an automatic in each hand.

Then there was Paul Fitzner. During the night, crouching in a dugout of the trenches, waiting to go over, Paul had talked to his sergeant. "Sergeant, I feel I'm not coming out of this one. They've got my number this time."

Gumpertz tried to reassure him, quoting statistics often used for the purpose. "Why, in a drive only one in ten is killed, and only one in three is hit."

"I'm not coming out of this, Sergeant," the boy repeated stubbornly.

And not three minutes after going over, Sergeant Gumpertz stepped over Paul Fitzner's dead body. The boy had been the first of the platoon to find death.

But just a few minutes later the platoon was given a big laugh. Corporal Prazak, besides his two bandoliers and belt of rifle ammunition, carried, tied to this belt, a girdle of hand grenades. Suddenly, as the platoon plunged down a declivity into the fog, the corporal came under rifle fire, and several bullets, without hitting him, struck his belt and started some of the cartridges popping like firecrackers among the grenades. Now the explosion of a grenade is almost the equivalent of a shell's; and it was Corporal Prazak's acrobatic anxiety to be free of his belt which pleased the platoon. "We certainly had a good laugh," says Sergeant Gumpertz.

The little band swept forward, hidden by fog and smoke from the outfits to right and left, each man vanishing at times from sight of the man to his right or his left. The way was down hill. They came to a stream. Shells were dropping into the stream, on the near bank, on the far bank. Holding their

rifles up high, the platoon splashed across, waist-deep, and with brogans full of water, went squoshing up the opposite bank and up a hill to a sunken road—all except the few who had remained in the brook.

In the sunken road, following the pre-ordered schedule, they rested for fifteen minutes.

Forward again they went, up the hill. They reached a plateau, Gumpertz leading in the fog and smoke, the enemy invisible, they invisible to the enemy. And suddenly Gumpertz felt himself sliding. It was into a trench that he was sliding. A German trench. His boys swarmed about him, and the trench seemed an empty one. No Germans, except the few dead. "Wait a minute," said Gumpertz in the fog. They scrambled out of the trench, and a smoke bomb was thrown in.

It sputtered down there, filling the crevice with its acrid noisome smoke. And out of the entrance of a dugout, until then unnoticed, fifty Germans came sneezing, coughing, and kamerading. "You'd have laughed if you had seen them," now says Sergeant Gumpertz.

Sending the prisoners to the rear, the platoon resumed its advance, a dogged walk forward under shell fire, with rifle bullets whispering and cater-

wauling in the fog, across a system of trenches, into a land made a weird lunar landscape by the artillery preparation. They shot now and then, they bayoneted now and then, the Sergeant used his automatic, while here and there a big burst told of a grenade having been thrown; but they did not stop long in any place, leaving the mopping-up to those coming behind, intent on getting forward, ever forward, and sticking to schedule. And thus they came to their first obstacle, a hidden machine-gun.

Ahead there in the fog it was taunting them, flat-tongued, like a sinister giant bad child, going ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta in ugly derision; and across the field before the advancing men the earth was exploding in little spurts that swept from left to right, from right to left, as the invisible gunners swung their stuttering piece to and fro, to and fro, in a gesture like that of a housewife watering her flowers in the morning.

Down the men went, and, once down, found themselves nailed to the earth, bullets all about, spouting up the ground under their noses, whispering past their ears, or screeching by in wailing ricochets.

Sergeant Gumpertz called for two volunteers,

and two of his men crawled up to his side. One was Corporal Paul Siclar, a French Canadian, a good soldier, obedient, respectful of discipline, never giving any trouble. The other was Sebastian Emma, a little "wop," who was always in trouble —turbulent, disobedient, lover of red wine, an incorrigible A.W.O.L.

"Come on," said Sergeant Gumpertz, and rose to his feet and started to run. And Siclar and Emma, good soldier and bad soldier, also rose to their feet and started to run, toward the clatter of the machine gun over there somewhere in the depths of the fog. They did not crawl; they did not dodge from cover to cover; they ran straight for that murderous stammering in the fog, holding their rifles, bayonets fixed, across their chests, the sergeant with his automatic poised. They could not see anything; but the bulge of Gumpertz's breeches, and the flaps of his blouse were being ripped by bullets which were passing all low, below the waist. They were running toward a sound: a sound that must be extinguished, smothered, annihilated—for the sake of the precious schedule. They still had seen nothing, when suddenly the ground rose under their feet. Up the slight slope of a parapet they

flew—and found themselves looking down, and shooting down, into a machine gun nest.

Gumpertz was shooting with his automatic, the two boys with their rifles. "The beauty of an automatic," Gumpertz says, "is that all you have to do is press the trigger and it keeps on shooting. I hadn't known I was so near the nest. It opened right under my feet. I almost fell into it."

They did not shoot long. The gunner was lying across his gun; around him, hands were going up, to guttural cries of kamerad. The three men stopped shooting and fourteen prisoners came out. The machine gun was of the heavy type, a good prize.

The platoon swept up, and the advance was resumed. The German artillery which had been smothered by the furious preparation fire was coming to life again; occasional shells were dropping. And in about fifteen minutes, again the platoon came under the fire of a machine-gun nest, its sweep forward halted and screwed down to earth.

Gumpertz once more called for volunteers, and once more Paul Siclar and Sebastian Emma came crawling up to him. The German artillery was beginning to get the range. Between them and the sound of the invisible machine gun, shells were

dropping. "Artillery formation," Gumpertz ordered. Which meant going in file, the second man five yards behind the first, the third man five yards behind the second.

Gumpertz set out, taking the lead. But Siclar ran up to him, and plucked at his sleeve like a small boy. "Sergeant," he said breathlessly, "let me go first. If you get killed, very bad for us, Sergeant; if I get killed, no matter."

"Artillery formation." Gumpertz repeated his order, and Siclar dropped back to the regulation position.

It was like the first time in that they could not see the gun; it was a sound, a sinister sound; they were charging. It was not like the first time in that they were now running across a space that was shaking and spouting to the dropping of great shells.

They had gone about twenty or thirty yards when one of the shells burst among them. Gumpertz was knocked to his knees, deafened and half blind. As his senses quickly returned, he saw Siclar lying behind him. The boy's head had been blown off his body; only a lifeless trunk lay there. And a little farther back Sebastian Emma was lying.

He had been a bad soldier, this little Italian

Emma; he had been careless of his equipment, often A.W.O.L., and Gumpertz, first sergeant, had been hard on him. But he now crawled to his side. "That's all right, Emma; you're going to be all right."

"Oh, no, Sergeant, I die, I die. Good-by!" And Emma, bad soldier, died.

Through a quick rift of the fog Gumpertz now saw the machine gun; saw for the quickest of fleeting instants the stretched, venomous, spitting head swing from left to right and back again; and seizing a hand grenade hurled it toward it; and, arising to one knee and then to his feet, hurled himself toward it, automatic poised high.

There was about twenty yards to go. The fog had shut down again and protected him; the grenade, although it had missed the gun, had killed and wounded in the nest. Tat-tat-tat-tat-tat went the gun, once more invisible, and bullets were ripping the bulge of his breeches, the folds of his blouse. Gumpertz ran at full speed toward what he had seen for an instant in a hole of the fog, and, as the first time, felt the earth rise beneath him, and abruptly was on the parapet, looking down vertically upon the gun and the crew.

Some of the men had rifles; they seemed too

paralyzed to use them. He killed the gunner, who fell asprawl his gun. He killed a figure who started tugging at the gunner to get him off and man the gun. Over to the left his grenade had made a terrible hash in the nest. It takes several seconds for a grenade to explode; the explosion had beaten his arrival by only a moment. Perhaps to those down below there, the first sight of him, gigantic in the fog, had been simultaneous with the deafening and deadly burst. He shot again; then he saw their hands going up. It was a good prize: two machine guns of heavy type, and sixteen prisoners.

"My clothes were torn to shreds with bullets. I was a ragamuffin. Figure that out," he now says soberly.

"Were you excited?" I asked. "Were you in a Berserker rage?"

"No," he said, "I was cool enough. You see, I didn't think I was doing anything. We had objectives to reach, and we were being delayed. We were being stopped. It wasn't till it was all over that from the way the others talked I began to guess I had done something."

"Were you a good shot with the automatic?" I asked.

"While we were lying around before the drive,

I'd been shooting at tin cans to get my hand in. I was a pretty good shot. Not as good as Mallon. He always got the bull's eye. I'll tell you what kind of shot I was. I didn't make many bull's eyes, like Mallon, but I was always shooting around the bull's eye; well, within the breadth of a man."

He thought for a while. "The fog helped me," he said slowly. "Maybe they didn't see me come at all. Maybe the first thing they saw was me on top of their parapet, shooting down into them."

Imagine it from the other side. How did he look to those soldiers down in the machine-gun nest, that embattled Jew suddenly appearing above them, large in the fog?

Once more the platoon swept up, and they went on. They came to trenches. Darting around a corner, within a trench, Gumpertz came upon the nine-foot-four German. "I came upon him suddenly, around a corner," he says. "He was nine feet four in height and about one hundred inches around the chest. I shot him, and he went down; and he was only an ordinary little fellow, about five feet six, and maybe thirty around the chest."

They came to the fringe of a forest, the Bois de Forges. Again a machine gun held them up. The fog was clearing in patches. They could see the spot

from which came the deadly sprinkle, a concrete pill-box at the further edge of a clearing, with just one slit—that out of which the bullets spit. Sergeant Gumpertz worked his way to one side of the pill-box, then advanced upon its blind flank. Crawling the last fifty yards, he reached the foot of the wall below the slit. He rose slowly along the wall, a grenade in hand. When his hand was almost at the slit, with a little flip of the fingers, as one feeds a piece of sugar to a horse, he let the grenade drop within. A muffled explosion resounded in the hermetic space, and the iron door at the back flew open. Sergeant Gumpertz cast a look through the door. Nothing in there to fear now. The platoon went on—through green woods now, wet with mist, draped in fog.

"Zip — zip — zip — meeau — au-au." Sergeant Gumpertz was being shot at, was being sniped at from somewhere. "There's the son-of-a-bitch," one of Gumpertz's men shouted, pointing to a platform high up in a tree. "You get him," said Gumpertz, who had no rifle, and his soldier got him. Down out of the tree the gray form came falling like a squirrel; but falling caught a branch, righted his tumble, reached the ground on his feet, and grabbed his automatic, still fighting. A member of the

platoon, coming athwart him, bayoneted him before he could press the trigger. Passing, Gumpertz saw that the dead sharpshooter was only a boy, seventeen or eighteen.

They came to a German major leaning weak and pale against a tree, his left arm holding in its hand a limp shattered right arm. He spoke English. Gumpertz stopped a moment to point the way toward the rear first aid stations. "Never mind me," gasped the major. "Help my men! Help my men!" And remained there, weak and pale against the tree, as Gumpertz went on.

Toward the advancing platoon came a great rolling crash. A German counter-barrage, a wall of bursting shells, was crawling steadily toward them. The platoon was in a clearing; they dropped to the earth, trying to dig little holes before the thing was on them. The barrage came on steadily, and slowly rolled over them. Sergeant Gumpertz, peering from under his helmet, peering under his armpits, could see the ground going up everywhere in great spouts. He thought it impossible that anyone could survive; he thought that surely now he had lost his platoon; he thought that surely now they were all dead. And found himself roaring with laughter when, the barrage having lifted and gone on its thundering

way, he saw them rise (most of them), with almost ludicrous alacrity to go forward once more.

They came upon another machine gun nest. But this time Sergeant Gumpertz's pockets were picked. Out of the fog came charging at right angles Sergeant John T. Bell of another platoon, and whisked the prize right from under Sergeant Gumpertz's nose. They came now to what seemed a rustic picnic ground of peace times. Pretty huts of tree branches and bark dotted a clearing. Eight or ten frightened cooks and bottle-washers put up their hands. Soup was steaming in caldrons, within the huts. Sergeant Gumpertz sampled the contents, stuffed one pocket with the concentrated tablets from which it was made, and came upon a box of black cigars. Into his other pocket went the cigars, and one into his mouth; on he went, delicately puffing.

They came on the run upon a battery of 155 Howitzers—big guns such as exist usually only far in the rear—and the four big guns were already captured guns; they had been captured by their captain, Mallon. Standing on the emplacement, he was questioning the battery's German commander. The German commander was not standing up; he was seated. Sitting on the ground, his head in his

hands, he was gently shaking that head and trying to free it from the cobwebs that enmeshed it. For Captain George H. Mallon, in capturing the battery of big cannon, had used his own usual and peculiar method. He had swung his right and captured the battery with his fist.

The Jewish sergeant greeted his Irish captain. He was glad to see the captain. Everyone was glad to see him. For this was about the first the company had seen of him since the beginning of the drive.

He had become separated from his company in the fog soon after going over. But picking up here and there a few other strayed men, with these he had carried on; and in his promenade in the fog toward the objective, had taken on the way nine active machine guns before coming upon the Howitzers. Here is the citation which in the severe and meager military language describes the stroll of Captain Mallon—which got him the Congressional medal of honor.

"George H. Mallon, Captain 132d Infantry, 33d Division. In the Bois de Forges, France, September 26. Becoming separated from the balance of his company because of a fog, Captain Mallon with nine soldiers pushed forward and attacked nine active hostile machine guns, capturing all of them without the loss of a man. Continuing through the

woods, he led his men in attacking a battery of four 155-millimeter Howitzers, which were in action, rushing the position and capturing the battery and its crew. In this encounter Captain Mallon personally attacked one of the enemy with his fists. Later, when the party came upon two more machine guns, this officer sent men to the flanks while he rushed forward directly in the face of the fire and silenced the guns, being the first one of the party to reach the nest. The exceptional gallantry and determination displayed by Captain Mallon resulted in the capture of 100 prisoners, 11 machine guns, 4 155-millimeter Howitzers, and one anti-aircraft gun."

Sergeant Gumpertz and his platoon marched on. The fog was giving signs of lifting; they could now see other platoons to their right, to their left. And finally they burst out of the woods, and the Meuse lay before them.

They had reached their objective. The sun suddenly burst through the fog. Over there a bit to the right a bridge lay across the river, and tight upon it the retreating Germans were passing. Lying comfortably along the edge of the wood, the men of the company turned their rifles upon the bridge.

Fists were of no use here. Captain Mallon, borrowing a rifle from one of his soldiers, set himself to some earnest target practice; lying by his side, his

first sergeant emulated him. It was now ten o'clock; they had started at five-thirty. They had done a rather good morning's work, the Irish captain and his Jewish sergeant; they deserved this little rest.

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Thus Sergeant Gumpertz won the Congressional Medal of Honor. But his fighting did not end there. On October 8 the division attacked again. Crossing the Meuse, it took the forest of Consenvoye in a bitter protracted battle, and Gumpertz was wounded and forced to the rear. "I thought I had been kicked by a mule," is the way he now describes it.

There Charlie Chaplin died. He was a Pole; his real name was Jacob Gelonveki, but everyone called him Charlie Chaplin. He would go up to Sergeant Gumpertz and salute. "Charlie good soldier?" he would ask.

"Yes, Charlie," Gumpertz would say. "One of the best I've got."

"I want to be good soldier," Charlie would say, and salute and move away.

That day he was lying by his sergeant, facing a counter-attack as it swept toward them. Charlie was a crack shot; he hardly ever missed. To-day,

as the enemy came on and he fired carefully, he was counting. "One," he had counted, and "two," "three," "four," and so on. "Fourteen!" he counted. Just then a bullet drilled him between the eyes.

For the rest of the battle of the Argonne, Gumpertz was in the hospital. But he was with his company once more when the division marched into Luxembourg after the armistice. And there he was when ordered to headquarters at Chaumont to receive his medal.

January 23rd had been set as the day for the ceremony, and Sergeant Gumpertz arrived in time. But General Pershing was off on a tour of inspection; the pinning of medals was postponed to February 6.

And now the other grandfather took command of Sergeant Gumpertz. For nine months he had been entirely under the influence of the maternal grandfather who had fought in Napoleon's guard. Now the other grandfather—the one who had driven a trader's mule wagon through the Californian mining camps—began to whisper in his blood. In the toy shop of Chaumont, imitation German iron crosses, made of zinc, were being sold. Sergeant Gumpertz bought one for fifteen cents.

A few days later Captain Mallon, who was also

in Chaumont to receive his medal and who seems to have taken a certain interest in his sergeant's venture, said to him, "I've got a live one for you."

"Take me to him," said Gumpertz.

Mallon took him to the live one, who was sitting at a little table in a café. He was an officer fresh from the States, just come to the war three months after it was ended. He was all shining; he creaked with new leather; and best of all, he was an artillery officer.

With respect and with awe, out of his deepest pocket Gumpertz drew forth the iron cross which, in hand-to-hand combat, he had snatched from the very chest of the German colonel he had killed; and the live one gave him fifty dollars for it. So that when, some months later, the sergeant landed in New York, his military career over, he was not absolutely penniless, and was able to refuse a monstrous benefit the Jewish community offered him. It's all right to sell little tin crosses to live ones, but not to capitalize one's real medal of honor.

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Sydney G. Gumpertz is now settled in New York. He is commander of the S. Rankin Drew Post of the American Legion, and much interested

in Legion affairs. In his office are framed many certificates testifying to his awards of the Medaille Militaire, the Légion d'Honneur, the Italian war cross, the medal of Verdun. But it is in the drawing room of his home that you can see the citation for the medal of honor. Whenever I asked him when I could see him he would say, "You can get me at home any evening." And he would be there —with Mrs. Gumpertz, the little lady who worked while he fought, till the war got too thick and nervous and she could only wait.

I asked him several times just what his present business was, and several times was parried. "To tell you the truth," he finally said, "I've been mostly playing the stocks for the last two years."

Judging from the apartment which is his home, he must play them very well.

Sergeant John Cridland Latham

SERGEANT LATHAM, SERGEANT EGGERS, CORPORAL O'SHEA

The Citation

John Cridland Latham, Sergeant, Alan Louis Eggers, Sergeant, Thomas E. O'Shea, Corporal, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division. Near Le Catelet, France, September 29, 1919. Becoming separated from their platoon by a smoke barrage, Sergeant Latham, Sergeant Alan L. Eggers and Corporal Thomas O'Shea, took cover in a shell hole well within the enemy's lines. Upon hearing a call for help from an American tank which had become disabled thirty yards from them, the three soldiers left their shelter and started toward the tank under heavy fire from German machine guns and trench mortars. In crossing the fire-swept area Corporal O'Shea was mortally wounded, but his companions, undeterred, proceeded to the tank, rescued a wounded officer, and assisted two wounded soldiers in the sap of a nearby trench. Sergeant Latham and Sergeant Eggers then returned to the tank in the face of the violent fire, dismounted a Hotchkiss gun, and took it back to where the wounded men were, keeping off the enemy all day by effective

use of the gun and later bringing it, with the wounded men, back to our lines under cover of darkness.

SERGEANT LATHAM, Sergeant Eggers, Corporal O'Shea—the vision is of grizzled, battle-baked veterans. But Alan Eggers, when he wrote his name into the citation quoted above, and Thomas O'Shea, when, dying, he wrote his name into the citation quoted above, were mere boys, boys such as you see on tennis court, on track and field or river, on trampled gridiron, "fighting" for college and alma mater. And John Latham the Englishman, though probably the other two thought him quite old, and though he was in fact old enough to father them a bit, was not yet thirty. He had been a landscape gardener; it was from lilies and roses and dewy gardens he had come into this.

Alan Eggers and Thomas O'Shea had lived all of their lives in the same town, Summit, New Jersey. From kindergarten days, through grammar school and high school, they had been pals; they had paddled in rain-pools together, fished and played ball together. Both belonged to families of what might be called the cultured middle class, Alan's father a publisher, Tommy's a private banker. Alan—his father is of German descent, his mother of Welsh—

is a long, long boy, sandy-haired, silent and gentle. Although six feet two, he weighed only one hundred and forty pounds when he went to war. Tommy, of Irish parentage—his picture shows him as a handsome, black-haired, blue-eyed Celt—was an athlete. He had played football at Summit High School and at Carlton Academy.

While I was delving into the family history, John Eggers, Alan's father, warned me against his long, quiet son's outward shyness. "Underneath," he said, "he's fairly stubborn. Even when he was a little bit of a shaver he was a bit stubborn."

It seems that when Alan was three years old he took a dislike to a certain pudding; from that day he refused to eat of that pudding. The father reasoned, the mother reasoned, the whole family reasoned. He would listen very quietly to the one hundred and forty-four reasons why he should eat his pudding. Then he would say, "Well, I don't want no pudding."

When he was six he got into a serious disagreement with a young woman of five who lived next door. She had violated in some way the secret code of his loyalties, and he shut her out of his life. The parents were friends; the little girl's mother felt badly over this tragedy and came over to Alan's

Sergeant Alan L. Eggers

father for a talk. John Eggers, publisher, wise in living, called his son and made a little speech. One should never feel perfectly certain of being absolutely right; even if right, one should be tolerant; if everything else were lacking, one could at least forgive. "Do you understand?" he said to the little son, who stood very straight before him.

"Yes, sir," said Alan, "I understand. But I don't agree with you."

Years later (he was nineteen now), on the Saturday immediately following the declaration of war of April 6, 1917, that same boy came home from Cornell, where he was a sophomore, and announced that he was enlisting.

All day Saturday and all day Sunday his father wrestled with him. John Eggers was against undue haste; he thought his son should try for a commission. On Monday he sent Alan back to Cornell. And on Monday Alan's elder brother, John Winthrop, enlisted in the Marines.

On Tuesday Alan was home again. He said that all the boys in Cornell he cared for were gone; that all those still up there were those he did not care for; that he was going to enlist. His mother took him in hand this time, tried to get him to consent to go to an officers' training camp. "All right,"

he said at length, "but if I get a commission and land in some soft job while the other boys are over there, I'd rather be dead than meet them again."

The next day he enlisted in the Machine Gun Company of New York's "dandy" Seventh.

"Why the Seventh?" I asked him ten years later.

"Lots of the Summit boys were going there," he said. "And the regiment had been on the border, and I was told it would go over at once." He paused with a rueful smile. "Gee, it didn't go over for thirteen months!"

"Why did you choose the machine guns?"

Again the wistful grin. "Well, I thought if I went in at all I might as well go in good. And I had friends in there." He looked far off a moment. "That's the mistake I made. Going in with friends. It's no fun to see friends dropping to right and left."

The day after Alan's enlistment Tommy O'Shea came to see him. And Tommy immediately enlisted in the machine gun company of the "dandy" Seventh. The two found other Summit boys in the company. Their lieutenant, Edward Willis, was a Summit boy and neighbor. Eggers and O'Shea chummed with Jack Cleary, a New York boy. Then John Latham joined the company and became

one of their group. He was English, born in Windermere, Westmorland, in the lake district; he had come to the United States in 1908. His forebears for generations were landscape gardeners; he had spent all his life among flowers.

At first the soldier life of Eggers, O'Shea and Latham was a commuter's life. They lived at home and every day went in to New York to drill in Central Park. The company had been given Benet-Mercier machine guns, and with these ran up and down the sheep meadow, dodging from rock to rock. The day's work done, they took the train and went back home for the night.

This hardly seemed serious to the boys, stamping to get away. But a curious thing happened. Benet-Mercier machine guns are like Hotchkiss guns. Later they used Vickers guns. But a day came when they gave thanks for that knowledge of a Hotchkiss, gained through playing with Benet-Merciers in the sheep meadow in Central Park.

Little by little the matter became more serious. They ceased to commute and were housed in the armory. Then the Seventh became the One Hundred and Seventh, a part of the Twenty-seventh Division, and entrained for Spartanburg, in South Carolina. It drilled there for seven months. Not

only drilled but built roads, blasted out stumps and chopped trees. Eggers recalls this period with no sentimentality; with a sort of horror. "Drill? I'll say we did! Eight hours a day. And that wasn't all. Seven months of it! It was terrible!"

But Latham laughs. He had been used to physical labor from childhood. He says that at this preliminary work Alan Eggers was the worst soldier he ever saw. "He plumb refused to work on the roads," he says. "He had enlisted to fight, and he wasn't going to dig any roads."

Without knowing of the pudding episode, or of the little-girl moment in Eggers' life, Latham became anxious. He began to take the boy aside for friendly talks, till lo, private Alan Eggers built roads.

The Benet-Mercier guns had been left behind. The machine gun company was now using British Vickers, and Latham has been made a corporal, with both Eggers and Tommy O'Shea in his squad.

"O'Shea was a wonderful boy, always on the job, always ready to go," Latham now says. "Those two boys, Alan and Tommy, deserved far more credit than I did; their kind deserved far more credit than my kind. I had worked when a boy, I was used to hardship and labor, but they had had noth-

ing of it. And now this work was really hard—oh, it was a heart-breaker! We drilled and drilled; every man-jack had to be letter perfect; General O'Ryan saw to that. I'd go with him again."

In April, 1918, the division sailed for France, and young Eggers thought that he was going to fight at last. But in France the division continued to drill. The machine gun company went to machine gun school with the British.

Latham, gardener and lover of landscapes, glows as he now tells of the place. It was in northern France, on the Channel. It was a good place to train with machine guns, because on the water there were lots of things to shoot at, and on land many dunes from behind which to shoot. But it was the beauty of the land which engraved itself on the florist's heart. "I had never dreamed of a place so beautiful," he says. It reminded him of his native heath, the lake country of England. And —this being a British area—he actually came across men from Windermere, the village of his youth, and talked with them the soft district speech, full of thees and thous. He was a sergeant now, and his young friends Eggers and O'Shea were corporals.

The division moved into Flanders, into the defen-

sive sector known as the east Poperinghe line. Raids here, and patrollings; shell fire, night bombing from enemy planes, machine gun fire and sniping. Then the attack on and the taking of Vierstraat Ridge. But in this the 107th and its machine gun company were only in support, the advance being made by the 105th and 106th regiments.

When, on September 29, 1918, the Twenty-seventh and the Thirtieth American divisions, used as spear-head to the Fourth British Army and closely followed by the leap-frogging Australian corps, hurled themselves on the terrible and hitherto impregnable Hindenburg line along the Saint Quentin canal, John Latham, the gardener, Alan Eggers and Tommy O'Shea, young collegiates, were in their first great fight.

§

The Hindenburg line presented perhaps the most formidable and treacherous barrier ever attacked by troops. Here a length of the Saint Quentin canal passed underground in a tunnel six thousand yards long. This tunnel was like a storehouse of enemy troops; through an extraordinary system of deep communication trenches and underground passages these could be shot to any point of the

defense lines lying in front of the canal, and out to the advanced works and posts and strong points. The German commander could send troops spurting up at any spot as ants come out of an ant-hole. At the stamp of his foot, legions literally leaped out of the earth.

The system of trenches and outworks before the canal was almost a mile deep. All over that area machine gun nests had been cunningly placed to sweep all approaches and to support each other; and a bristling nightmare-forest of barbed wire concealed within itself labyrinthine trap lanes that lured attacking detachments into the leveling and annihilating fire of these guns.

Of the attacking spear-head formed by the two American divisions, the Twenty-seventh was the left half. Of the Twenty-seventh Division's front, the 107th Infantry regiment was the left half. And the machine gun company of the 107th was to follow immediately behind this regiment's first wave to protect its flank. So that it can well be said that the machine gun company in which were Latham, Eggers and O'Shea was flank guard not only of its own infantry but of the whole division and the entire corps. This flank was in part an exposed flank, for, to the left, the German positions

bent so that they could pour an enfilading fire upon the advance, and send streaming toward it, along the deep communication trenches, counter-attack after counter-attack.

Nor was this all. The British plan had been to take all the outworks of the line before the main attack, so that this attack might start at close quarters. The plan had failed. British divisions entrusted with it had broken themselves on the positions. The 106th Infantry of the Twenty-seventh Division, supported by the 105th, then had tried it. They had succeeded only partly. The ground over which the 107th and 108th was to sweep was strewn with small, scattered groups of their comrades of the 106th, fiercely clinging to shell hole, nest and sap, while the Germans still held the strong positions of the Knoll and Guillemont Farm, together with scattered dugouts, concrete minenwerfer and machine gun emplacements. Upon this brother-strewn field the barrage manifestly could not be laid: when the 107th and its machine gun company went over on the morning of September 29, they were almost a mile behind the barrage; almost immediately they came under a tempest of rifle, mortar and machine gun fire.

Here is what Alan Eggers said of this in a letter to his parents.

"Dear Mother and Father:

"We detrained about three o'clock Wednesday morning, hiked until about nine o'clock, and then pitched pup-tents in a shell-torn field, near what had once been a village. We stayed until Friday noon and then started our final hike to the front.

"We took until five o'clock Saturday morning to reach the trenches. We stayed in the trench all day Saturday. We were about 1700 yards from Fritz, and he kept firing shells, gas, and machine gun bullets, but didn't bother us.

"We got orders about nine o'clock Saturday night that we were to attack next morning, and were very busy from then on getting ready. We started out about two or two-thirty in the morning and went as far as we could with the limbers, then carried the guns and equipment up further, until we were in an open field and behind a little bank. This was where we were to start. We settled down to wait for the hour to come when we were to go over.

"I fell asleep and woke up just about dawn. I woke up cold, and for a minute I had a sickening feeling as I realized what we were about to do; but almost immediately we heard our barrage start, and then got the order to go over."

The machine gun company was just behind the first wave, and at the extreme left. Eggers, O'Shea and Latham were in the third platoon, which was commanded by Lieutenant Edward Willis, also a

Summit boy. The platoon had four Vickers machine guns, each manned by a squad of eight men. Eggers was the corporal of one of these squads, O'Shea the corporal of another; the section made by their two squads was under Sergeant Jack Cleary, a New York boy who had become their friend in camp; and Latham was sergeant at Willis's side. The friends were thus all together; and to each, soon, the story of the battle became the story of the platoon.

At the break of dawn they went over—walked up the steep bank behind which they had been waiting, then up the more gradual rise beyond, and at the top, still walking slowly, entered the level battlefield.

The objective was the canal, behind the terrible Hindenburg lines about three thousand yards distant—three thousand yards swept by machine gun fire from the main lines, from uncaptured advance-saps and concrete emplacements well to this side of the main lines, and from Vendhuile on the left flank, and Guillemont Farm on the right.

The formation was of squad columns. The four squads went in four files of eight men, each squad headed by its corporal. At the head of the platoon was Lieutenant Willis with Latham close by. A

little behind came the two section sergeants, John Cleary being one of these. Behind Cleary came the two squads of his section, headed, as we have seen, one by Eggers and the other by O'Shea. In each squad behind the corporal came the gunner, carrying the tripod; behind the gunner came the loader, or "feeder," carrying the gun; then, still in file, came the other six men, each with two heavy cases of ammunition.

That is the way the machine gunner advances. Under a load which would stagger a citizen going a city block. Doing it not along a smooth city block, but on a terrible terrain of shell holes, saps, trenches and barbed wire. Under fire, with comrades falling. Stubbornly carrying that heavy load, fifty pounds of tripod for the gunner, fifty pounds of gun for the leader, one hundred pounds of ammunition for each of the following six; not toward a reward of rest and pleasure but toward suffering and death. The platoon, in four files, steadily climbed the first rise. "I will never forget the scene," young Eggers wrote in the letter addressed "Dear Mother and Father." "There was a slight rise in front of us, and as we started up at a walk it was just light, with a mist over everything. I could see our own infantry advancing in wave formation in front

of me, and over the hill I could see all different-colored lights and rockets going up from Fritz's lines. They were his S.O.S. signals calling for a counter-barrage to protect him.

"Suddenly some Fritzies appeared on the skyline with their hands up. They were sent to the rear without guard, some of them being hit on the way. I thought then that the advance would be easy, and that they would do the same thing all along, but that was not to be."

At the top of the rise the platoon came under enemy fire. The way now was down a slightly sloping plain toward a shallow valley. From Vendhuile, ahead and to the left, they were being raked by machine gun fire; from Guillemont Farm, to the right, they were being raked by machine gun fire. The platoon, in four files, advanced steadily and calmly. Under their heavy loads, the men trudged forward some fifty or sixty yards, then plumped down in shell holes for a minute's rest, while the lieuteant, the sergeants and the corporals rectified their bearings. The objective was the canal, an open cut in their sector, through a tunnel further to the right; the direction was toward Le Catelet, a village on the other side of the canal.

They entered the valley. They were now under

fire from Vendhuile to the left, from Guillemont Farm to the right, from the Knoll ahead, and from unmopped nests on the slopes on both sides. Ahead they could see tanks—great "5-star" tanks, veritable Behemoths—waddling along, rolling and pitching, crushing through wire with spitting guns.

Here Jack Cleary, New York boy, friend of Eggers and O'Shea, fell with a bullet through his stomach. He was the section sergeant. Eggers moved up to his place. The platoon went on under a rising hail of fire. They crossed two lines of German trench, abandoned, full of lugubrious remains.

"I know I had no sensation of fear," says young Eggers' letter, "but had a rapidly rising hatred for Fritz and a desire to get at him, and I think we all felt that way."

They went on: a few yards, then a drop in a shell hole, panting; then a few yards more. The situation was becoming more and more difficult. Groups of the enemy, suddenly appearing from holes, came at them. Their job was not to give heed to such swirlings, but to keep going ahead and bring up their machine guns where they would be dreadfully needed when the infantry should have reached its objective and consolidated against the inevitable counter-attacks. They defended themselves

with their automatics, and in each squad there was one good shot carrying a rifle. Now and then, toward some threat against the left flank which it was their mission to protect, they set the Vickers down. Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta, went the Vickers, and flank attacks dissolved in the haze.

To the right was a great tank, seemingly in trouble; an officer, hanging out of the open door, was signaling. While the platoon stopped in shell holes, Lieutenant Willis, under heavy fire, crossed over to the tank. It had swerved from its direction, and Willis set it right. The tank, flipping its tail as it turned, started rolling on at its grotesque gait. Willis returned to the platoon. He was in a shell hole just in front of the one holding Eggers and Robins. Eggers broke a package of cigarettes and passed one to Robins. He remembers that the ticket coming with the package read, "Murad—the essence of metropolitan luxury."

They had time for a few puffs when, in the shell hole just ahead of them, Lieutenant Willis turned, half rose, and raised his hand in the signal that meant "Forward again." Just then a bullet burst open his chest.

Latham, Eggers and Robins were immediately by his side. The wound was a gaping one, the blood

was pouring out, the dressings they tried to apply would not stay. Then Robins jerked off one of his puttees, and in a passion of desire to stop that blood from thus gushing out, that life from pouring out, wrapped the long spiral round and round the torn chest, tight, tight. But the white-faced head rolled back, the eyes capsized, and Lieutenant Willis went out like a light.

In the Army Book of Decorations, under the awards of the Distinguished Service Cross, the following citation stands:

"Edward Willis, First Lieutenant 107th Infantry, 27th Division. Near Ronssoy, France, September 29, 1928. He displayed remarkable gallantry in leading his platoon of machine guns for more than 2000 yards under terrific machine gun fire. Even after being mortally wounded and unable to advance further, he continued to urge his men on. Posthumously awarded. Medal presented to his widow, Mrs. Edward Willis."

Latham now took command. Eggers became platoon sergeant, and O'Shea section sergeant. Latham raised his hand; out of the shell holes the remaining men of the platoon staggered under their heavy loads and walked on.

"What made you give the order to go on?" I asked Latham ten years later.

He looked at me in amazement. "Why," he said,

"at the very moment Willis was hit he was giving the order to advance!"

They now entered the smoke. A smoke barrage had been put down by their artillery to hide and shield their exposed left flank; a breeze took hold of this smoke and filled with it the little valley along the bottom of which they were advancing. In a few moments everything had vanished to their right and their left, and they were groping forward like blind men.

They had to stop often, but they went on. They went on in this heavy fog, laboriously, gropingly, halting often, but going on. Whenever they threw themselves down, clinging to the ground gained, fingers and toes dug into sides of shell holes, Latham, late landscape gardener, consulted with Alan Eggers and Tommy O'Shea, late schoolboys. They were going by luminous compass. They could see but a few feet ahead or to either side. Bullets, shells, cut the smoke to right, to left, above, spurted earth into their eyes, their mouths, but let in no daylight.

They did not know, of course, how the battle was going. They did not know that while, to the right, the Thirtieth Division had succeeded in crossing the canal where it was a tunnel, and the right half of

their own division had thrown itself well athwart the lines of trenches defending it, that part of the division of which they were the extreme left had been melting and dissolving in one of the most desperate situations met by any body of troops in the war. Enfiladed by terrific fire from the left, meeting flank attack after flank attack, facing terrible fire from the front, they had stubbornly taken the position called the Knoll and the outer defenses, and had preserved the entire corps' flank, but had been unable to gain the canal, still half a mile away.

In the smoke, with this desperate fighting going on all about them, unseen and muffled, the little platoon of machine gunners was patiently pushing on. At the end of another half hour the smoke became so thick that Latham, Eggers and O'Shea decided they must wait until it cleared up, as it was impossible to keep direction. There were now only fourteen men left in the platoon out of the original thirty-nine—Sergeant Latham, Corporals Eggers, O'Shea, Thompson and Robins, and Privates Posser, Powers, Murphy, Klopfer, Binney, Brownley, Essel, Allen and Althoff.

They were clinging to the side of an enormous shell hole, in the impenetrable night of the barrage smoke, while about them shells were dropping, and

over them machine gun bullets passed in single flights or buzzing flocks. Now and then the smoke eddied a bit under their dug-in feet, and they saw down there a sinister pool of corrupt waters. One of the Vickers guns had been left behind, disabled. Now a bullet plunked through the jacket of Eggers' gun and made this one useless. At ten-thirty they established the two remaining Vickers in defensive position.

But those boys were worrying. Latham, the florist, Alan Eggers and Tommy O'Shea, the boys from Summit, New Jersey, young Robins from New York, consulted frequently. They did not know that the infantry had been practically halted, that the 107th, torn, broken, decimated, its remnants scattered in desperately held shell holes and trenches, meeting, with hand grenades, attack after attack from the flank while still holding that precious flank and guarding the division and the corps and the entire battlefield, was no longer going forward, and that the platoon was now a spear-head well ahead and alone.

They did not know this, but they knew that they had not reached their objective—the canal behind the smoke somewhere over there in the direction of the invisible Le Catelet. So when, after a while, the

smoke began to lift, they picked up their two remaining guns, picked up their ammunition, clambered out of the great shell hole, and once more laboriously trudged forward.

They went ahead twenty, fifty yards, then down into a shell hole for a rest; twenty, fifty yards, then into a shell hole for a rest; thus in short, laborious portages. As they went on, the smoke lifted more and more, and their surprise grew; there was no one ahead of them, no one to the right or the left. They were alone. They had left the bed of the valley; they were on the right slope of it. They forced forward thus for about three hundred yards —and suddenly came into blasts of machine gun fire from all sides. Into shell holes they went. Here they consulted again, Latham, Eggers, O'Shea and Robins. Their isolation worried them. They feared they had strayed from the right direction, and Eggers and Robins offered to reconnoiter.

The two started forward again, while the other twelve held the shell holes with the two Vickers. Crawling, making short dashes, the two boys pointed some two hundred yards farther, and came to a German trench on the side of the hill. Gingerly inspecting it, they found it abandoned. And there it was, a little way ahead, the canal, at its exit from

the tunnel! Their objective, just a little ahead! But not an American to be seen, not an American anywhere. And down there in the valley, about three hundred yards away Germans were coming out of a hidden trench to their left. And up the hill ahead, about two hundred yards away, Germans were going into a trench that led around to their right. Bullets came from behind. It looked very much as if they were being surrounded. The two boys started back toward their platoon.

Meanwhile, looking through his glasses, Latham from his shell hole had seen in the haze ahead a man signaling. He wore an American uniform, he was an officer. Raising himself for a moment now and then, he was signaling as if for help. Eggers and Robins came across the man as they returned to the shell hole. He was First Lieutenant Rosborough, of the 301st tank corps. His left arm was shattered, his face and hands were seared, his eyes were almost blind. He told them that his tank, struck by direct hit of a German armor piercing shell, lay disabled a little way to the right, with all of its crew of thirteen killed or wounded; that he himself had been wandering about looking for Americans, and they were the first he had seen.

They took him along, back to the shell holes

where the platoon waited. O'Shea, at one of the guns, was peppering the Germans who were filing to surround them. The men again conferred. They decided to make for the tank: partly in order to succor the wounded there; partly because its equipment—it was armed with a one-pounder and two light Hotchkisses—might be of precious aid in organizing a defensive strong point; and partly out of a sneaking hope that they might be able to get it going again and resume their progress to the canal, in the direction of Le Catelet.

They knew, however, by this time, that they were well in the German lines and practically cut off. They must try to reëstablish liaison. Robins and Posser volunteered in an effort to cut through and report the platoon's position. They started, and this was the last the platoon saw of them.

But the two boys succeeded in their mission, passing between two enemy machine gun nests on the way, Robins being wounded. For this action both were given the Distinguished Service Cross with the following citations:

"Joseph Robins, Sergeant, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division. Near Ronssoy, France, September 29, 1918. During the time of the fighting against the Hindenburg line, Ser-

geant Robins voluntarily went forward to locate friendly troops, and in doing so he was obliged to pass between two strongly fortified enemy nests from which a deadly fire was pouring. Despite the fact that he was badly wounded, he communicated with the infantry and returned to his position."

"Frederick Posser, Corporal Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division. Near Ronssoy, France, September 29, 1918. During the thick of the fighting against the Hindenburg line, Corporal Posser voluntarily went forward to locate friendly troops, and in doing so he was obliged to pass between two strongly fortified enemy nests from which a deadly fire was pouring. Despite this obstacle he communicated with the infantry and returned to his position."

With Posser and Robins well on their way, the twelve men who were left, with Rosborough went toward the great British 5-star tank, wrecked about half way up the valley's southern slope. The enemy were shelling it with one-pounders; machine gun and rifle bullets were buzzing about it and rattling its steel sides; and it was two hundred yards away and the ground between was bullet-swept. It was a mad dash, through a tornado of death. Latham, Eggers, O'Shea and Rosborough alone reached the tank.

A story of disaster was before them. A shell had struck the great tank squarely; four of the crew

lay dead within. On the ground near by three others of the crew lay wounded, with Second Lieutenant Potter badly hit in the head and temporarily blinded. Thirty yards away, in a larger crater to which they had crawled, were four more men, all wounded. Those men, besides being wounded, had been gassed and burned; and the terrific concussion of the shell explosion in the small enclosed space had beaten them all into a passive state of stupor and daze—all except their sergeant, Frank J. Williams, who, although himself wounded, burned and shocked, still found strength in him to help the others.

Lieutenant Rosborough meanwhile had vanished. Having brought succor to his men, he had gone off, wounded, crippled and burned, to see if he could find more Americans. He was to have a busy afternoon of it; he was to be captured by the Germans, escape from four guards who were taking him to the rear, and finally make his way back to his own lines. But for the time being, again the boys of the platoon found themselves without officers, and proceeded to do the best they could.

Into the large crater where four of the wounded tank men had taken refuge, Eggers, O'Shea, Latham and Williams transported the three who lay

by the tank. Lieutenant Potter was placed in a small shell hole near the big crater. And now Binney and Althoff, got up with one of the Vickers. This was set up in the crater where the seven wounded had been placed—when it was discovered that a bullet had pierced the water-jacket, making the gun useless.

The rest of the squad, with the other gun, were nowhere to be seen—had not been able to come up. The agitation about the tank had drawn a renewal of the German fire. The five men, in charge of eight wounded, were at the mercy of the counter-attack which was sure to come. But there were, Sergeant Williams said, two light Hotchkiss guns in the tank. Eggers and O'Shea went crawling across the fire-swept ground, entered the dreadful wrecked machine with its tangle of torn machinery and dead men, secured the guns, and brought them back to the shell hole.

One gun was out of order, but the other was good. Hastily that Hotchkiss was set up, and Latham, thanking his stars for the Benet-Mercier training in the sheep meadow, Central Park, set himself to gunning. A German attack was debouching from a trench up the hill. Latham turned the spitting Hotchkiss upon it. The one-pounder in the

tank thundered. Sergeant Williams had crawled back to his tank and was manning its gun.

The attack dissolved: comparative quiet came, though the shell hole, with its miserable huddle of maimed, burnt, shocked, asphyxiated wounded, was being swept by a steady fire. Latham effected a hasty organization. Williams was called back—for the big wrecked machine, drawing the enemy's anti-tank projectiles, was untenable—and told off to assist Latham with the Hotchkiss. The wounded were made as comfortable as possible. Binney and Althoff were placed as lookouts on the lip of the crater. Eggers and O'Shea volunteered to seek the rest of the platoon, which must be behind somewhere, and to bring it up with its Vickers.

They knew their position now. Up the hill were German trenches and German guns; to the right were German trenches and German guns; bullets were coming at them from behind. They were cut off, the five men with the eight wounded. Alan Eggers and Tommy O'Shea now left the shelter of the big shell hole in an attempt to find the remaining Vickers and bring it up.

Their first movement out into the open drew new fire from the machine guns and snipers on three sides of them. They went on, exploring shell holes

in the hail of fire. And then Eggers felt himself pivoted about and knocked to his knees. A bullet had "creased" him across the back of the neck, yet without touching the vertebra. Never had there been a nicer distinction established between the blow that kills and the touch that spares. Young Eggers was six feet and two inches tall and weighed only a hundred and forty pounds; yet that exact bullet had cut flesh without touching the spine. Latham says the wound looked as if a Gillette razor blade had been drawn lightly but firmly across from left to right.

Knocked down by the blow, then staggering on dizzily, Eggers went tumbling plumb into a shell hole—and found company there. The same strange hand of chance which had saved his life by the smallest fraction of a millimeter had sent his dizzy lunge toward what he was seeking. In the shell hole were Essel, Thompson, Powers, Murphy, and the missing machine gun.

But meanwhile O'Shea had vanished. Returned to clear consciousness, Eggers lifted his eyes anxiously along the pitted and blasted terrain, and could see so sign of his friend. The men in the hole, heads low under the bullets, had not seen him.

Eggers had dropped on them suddenly as if out of the sky.

Tommy O'Shea, as a matter of fact, was lying dead not far away. A bullet, perhaps from the same sniper who had so nearly done for Eggers, had struck him between the eyes. Klopfer, a boy of the platoon who had not reached so far up, had seen him struck down, from his refuge down the valley, though Eggers was not to know this for some time.

Eggers took command in the shell hole. Examining the Vickers, he saw that it had been hit several times and was no good. The boys buried the lock deep into the earth so that, if captured, the gun would be even more completely useless. Powers had been badly wounded in the head; Murphy also was wounded. Ripping open their first-aid packages, they dressed each other's wounds. They then organized themselves for a last desperate defense, cleaned and loaded their automatics, and made a pile of the grenades some still carried. All this activity had drawn an increased fury of firing of all kinds, and it was useless to think of trying to move up to the larger crater.

In that larger crater, thirty yards from the tank, Latham, Binney and Althoff of the platoon, and

the wounded Sergeant Williams of the tank crew, stood guard over the seven helpless wounded. Before them, thirty yards away, was the wrecked tank with its four dead. And fifty yards behind, in another shell hole, were the remaining men of the platoon—Eggers, Powers, Murphy and Essel, three of them wounded. Over the lonely little troop a wind of bullets passed continuously and low, and every now and then the tank rang and shook to a direct hit from some tank gun.

Thus the long afternoon wore on. In the big crater, Binney and Althoff kept watch of the Germans. As time went on, these organized attacks against the small American force. Groups would work up close, along the deep communication trenches, then, coming out suddenly under a covering fire, would try to reach the marooned men. "Here they come from the right," "Here they come from the left," Althoff or Binney would say, and Latham, turning upon the attacks the deadly sprinkle of the Hotchkiss, nailed them to the earth, while in the second shell hole, their Vickers useless, Eggers and his four waited tensely, automatic and grenades in hand, for the last stand.

And the wounded, cold and weak and in a stupor, groaned and sighed; and in the lulls those boys,

thrown so suddenly into a position of such crushing responsibility, sought to ease them: dressed their wounds, put to their lips the water of their own canteens, propped their bodies up.

Twice everything seemed to be over, for twice the Hotchkiss jammed. But both times, dismounting the gun, Latham, a cartridge his only tool, got it working again before it was too late. Again the enemy almost got them. A yell from Binney gave the alarm. Three Germans had worked their way cunningly and undetected on the right flank, and were just setting up a machine gun when Binney's keen eyes spotted them. They were in a horribly favorable position: outside the Hotchkiss present angle of fire, and up hill from the crater, dominating it to the very bottom. Two or three purrs—that is all—and within the crater there would have been only a shambles and a vague stirring of torn torsos and limbs. But Binney's cry came in time. With a jerk Latham raised the Hotchkess, turned it in the air, slapped it down again. And just beat the others. His gun purred first, and out there the three snipers went up in the air, doubled up like jack-rabbits, and lay still.

Planes passed overhead. One came falling out of the sky, smashing up behind a knoll out of sight;

then another crashed nearer, not far from the tank. They could see the strangely broken body of the aviator lying by his broken plane, and they watched long and curiously before they finally decided the man was not one of their own.

Then a storm of shells came down about them. The hill above, where the German machine guns were, was being shelled; the emplacements to the right were being shelled—a cheering sight. But the shells were also dropping close to their holes. American shells! They surmised—which was true—that Robins and Posser had accomplished their mission; had broken through and reported the position and plight of the platoon, and that the artillery was trying to help. The hillside above was trembling and spouting; the enemy, for the time-being, had vanished.

The shelling stopped; they raised their heads. Ahead, to the right, behind, the Germans came out of their deep abris and resumed their work with machine gun, rifle and mortar.

Ten years later I asked Eggers, "Did you boys know at that time that you were winning Congressional Medals?"

"I should say not," he answered. He smiled his slow smile. "I thought we were in a mess. I didn't

think much of this stalling around. This wasn't getting us anywhere. This wasn't getting to our objective—the canal, in the direction of Le Catelet."

And when I asked Latham the same question, he laughed. "*I* thought we were in a mess," he said. "Here we were, just sticking in one place!"

When darkness began to fall, Eggers crawled out of his shell hole, rejoined Latham in the larger crater, and the two studied what had better be done.

There were in the large crater eleven men, eight of them wounded. There were in the small shell hole four men, two of them wounded. Even counting Eggers as valid, even counting Sergeant Williams as valid, because, although severely hit and shocked, he was indomitably carrying on, this was no party with which one could attack. Only one thing remained: get back to the American lines; bring in the wounded to first aid stations, and those still able to fight to their outfits. They decided to attempt this as soon as full night had set in.

It had set in, in fact, while they were making their decision; now was the time to go. But there were the men of the platoon who had not got up to the tank in the last dash; who might be lying near, perhaps wounded and suffering. So out of the crater Eggers went again, to explore in the darkness. He

came to the hole where Essel and Thompson and the wounded Murphy and the badly wounded Powers lay; to his whispered command they crawled out and joined the others in the larger crater. Eggers went on, groping about in the night. He was looking for Tommy, his childhood friend. But he could find no one, the shell holes were empty. Finally he stumbled on Klopfer, a little way down the hill. The boy—he had lied as to his age to enlist, and even now was only eighteen years old—had lain there alone during the long afternoon. He had seen Tommy O'Shea drop, but it did not occur to him to tell Eggers of this. So back to the crater wormed Eggers, shells dropping about, bringing Klopfer, but still in poignant ignorance of Tommy's fate.

The small party was now together—sixteen men, of which eleven were wounded. They had had no food since the midnight of the preceding day. Williams remembered there were rations in the tank. So he and Eggers crawled across to the eerie place, with the dead aviator lying near and the four dead soldiers within, and returned with bread and "maconicky," the British version of the American doughboy's monkey-meat. Latham distributed the food in meager rations to all, and then Williams raised everyone's hopes and desires by recalling that

there must still be some chocolate in the tank. Back to the tank, under the slackening fire, Eggers went to look for the chocolate.

He did not find it. "I didn't know the tank well," he said apologetically, telling me of this. "I didn't get Williams' directions, I guess. And it was a bit spooky in there."

Sergeant Latham got the forlorn command together. They slipped out of the crater and started toward their lines in the black night.

By this time the great battle—in which, boy soldiers thrown into the furnace for the first time, they had so conscientiously done the best they could—had turned into a great victory. Over to the right the Thirtieth Division had crossed the canal; to the right, nearer, the right half of their own division had thrown itself across the Hindenburg lines. The Australians were leap-frogging the exhausted and decimated American divisions, and the sacrificial work of the 107th, of its left battalion, of the machine gun company, was done. The little group, leaving their shell hole in the night to rejoin their lines, could do so with good conscience.

A dolorous way it proved. Eggers and Latham had studied while there was still light the direction they should take. They now led by compass, the

plan being to go south for a distance, parallel to the lines, in order to escape the enemy machine gun nests they knew to be behind them, and then to turn west. The progress was step by step, over a field pitted with shell holes, torn with demolished trenches, bristling with tangled barbed wire. Shells were dropping, every now and then a Very flare lit up the field with its cruel white glare, and everyone froze. Each time a trench showed dimly ahead, Eggers or Latham must go forward to reconnoiter while the rest waited. The wounded must be helped; some of them, especially the seared and shell shocked tank men, were helpless as babies. Sergeant Williams was assisting and supporting the blinded Lieutenant Potter; the less wounded helped the more sorely wounded; across barbed wire they sometimes had to be carried. Thus the group went on through the night: a few feet at a time, then stopping; a few more feet, then stopping; immobilized, with thumping hearts, whenever a flare destroyed the shielding darkness; halting for long periods of uncertainty while Latham or Eggers groped ahead, vanished, seemed gone forever, before out of the darkness he reappeared, giving the whispered command to resume the advance. The wounded

sighed and groaned; the less wounded helped, encouraged, and sometimes pleaded.

The knowledge that they were headed in the right direction came in a mournful enough manner, through the cries of the wounded scattered over the field, cries for water, for stretcher-bearers. Badly as they were off themselves, they would be forced to stop often, before some misfortune, some suffering far beyond theirs, to give a little of the water of their canteens, to prop up some twisted body. They came across an officer, Lieutenant Van Hudson, who had been lying for thirty hours with a shattered leg. Latham and Eggers picked him up, and went on, carrying him between them.

They reached at length support trenches, and the worst wounded—Lieutenant Van Hudson, Sergeant Williams and the tank men—were left there. Sergeant Williams was to get the Distinguished Service Cross for his twenty-four hours' work, with the following citation.

"Frank J. Williams, Jr., Sergeant Co. C. 301st Battalion, Tank Corps. Near Ronssoy, France, September 29, 1928. While operating against the enemy, his tank received a direct hit, killing or wounding the entire crew. Although severely wounded, Sergeant Williams assisted his tank com-

mander, who was severely wounded and temporarily blinded, to a position of shelter in the sap of a nearby trench. He then returned to his tank and under heavy fire continued to operate a six-pounder against the enemy until driven out by armor-piercing shells. He then assisted in the operation of a machine gun against heavy enemy fire from a trench that lay between them and our first line. When it became sufficiently dark, he aided his tank commander to a first aid station. His courage and heroic actions throughout the day were largely responsible for saving the life of the officer commanding the tank."

Latham and Powers took a trench ladder, stretched Lieutenant Potter upon it, and tried to carry him back to a first aid station, from which they meant to send up stretcher-bearers for the others. But their strength now failed them.

"It was a foolish idea, anyway," says Eggers, who has a way of speaking ruefully of that entire congressional medal affair, with a shake of the head and a smile as he thinks back over phases of it and their idiocy. "It was a long, long ladder. We were exhausted. We couldn't have carried the ladder alone. And here we were, trying to carry a wounded man on it, Latham and I!"

So they had to leave Potter with Williams and the tank men in the support trench while they went on after stretcher-bearers, with the wounded

Murphy and the badly wounded Powers. "My neck was beginning to get stiff," Eggers admits.

Dawn had come when wearily they staggered into the first aid station of Sainte Emilie. There Powers was taken care of and immediately evacuated to a field hospital. And Eggers, his wound dressed, found himself also tagged for the rear. But he did not want to go to the rear. With everyone taken care of now, Latham and he had just one idea —to find their company's present headquarters, and then to go back up there to look for Tommy O'Shea.

An Australian officer was in charge of the first aid station. Eggers walked up to him; as one gives a ticket at a gate, he handed him his tag. "*You* take it," he said. "I don't want it." The Australian grinned, winked, and took the tag.

Eggers and Latham turned their faces once more to the front, and came to Lieutenant Gow, the transport officer of their company, who told them it had been ordered out in the night. One glance at them was enough: the lieutenant ordered them into a dugout in the wall of a trench.

For a fraction of a minute they stood there indignant—then, as if hit on top of the head by a well wielded mallet, fell asleep.

Two days later came a cruel duty. Here is the way Eggers wrote of it in his letter to his parents: "On Wednesday our company went up to the battlefield again and did a little salvage work, and collected quite a number of German machine guns and equipment."

This salvage work was the burying of the dead. The remnants of the machine gun company, just out of hell, had been put to this task. The work went on under shell fire. "The dead had lain there forty-eight hours or more," Eggers says now. "You would come to an unrecognizable heap, and the dog tag would tell you it had been a friend."

Latham, while engaged at this, was struck in the side by a fragment of shell and went to the hospital for the remainder of the war. Doubly lonely now, Eggers asked permission to go where they had fought by the tank—to look for Tommy O'Shea. Klopfer by this time had told him that he thought he had seen O'Shea killed.

So Eggers took Klopfer with him, and inspected a long row of the dead. Shells were dropping. Klopfer, mere kid, found the body of his own chum there, and, unmanned and disconsolate, ceased to be of help in Egger's search. The latter was not feel-

ing much better. In a letter to his parents soon afterward he wrote:

"I spent the afternoon looking for Tommy O'Shea, who is reported missing, and that was trying work. Fritz was shelling us all day, and I was so unstrung that I was ducking for shells which were going well beyond me and standing up to some that were hitting about forty yards away." He did not find his friend. Tommy had been buried by an independent party on the spot where he had fallen. His body now lies in the cemetery of Bony, on the very battlefield; his father has the Congressional Medal won by the boy that day.

But Eggers in his wanderings came to the tank near which they had fought that long Sunday afternoon. In the big crater lay the two Hotchkiss guns. He picked up one of them with the idea of giving it to Latham as a souvenir. The gun was heavy—as heavy as his mind on this mournful search. After a while he got tired of the gun and dropped it somewhere. But the next day Colonel Gardner of the 105th Machine Gun Battalion, the very same man who, then a captain, had drilled them in Central Park in the use of Benet-Merciers, had the other Hotchkiss gun taken up out of the crater. He did not throw away his; he presented it, after the war,

to the home town of Eggers and O'Shea. The gun is now in the Public Library of Summit, New Jersey.

I asked Eggers: "Is it in the library garden outside or is it in the building?"

He wrinkled his brow in doubt. "I *think* they have it in a glass case," he said. "But I don't know. I've never been to see it."

N.B.: He lives in Summit.

And here is Egger's conclusion, as he wrote it to his mother and father at the time: "You know, father, I was a little afraid of myself when we first went into action, and wasn't sure how I would act under fire. But I feel now that I did my bit and kept my little end up."

Others also, it seems, felt that those boys had kept their little end up. The British Government awarded to Latham and Eggers, and posthumously to Thomas O'Shea, the Distinguished Conduct Cross; their own country gave them the Congressional Medal of Honor, and France its most prized decoration, the Medaille Militaire, together with the Croix de Guerre with palm. Italy gave its War Cross; Portugal its War Cross; Montenegro its Medal of Bravery.

§

Alan Eggers is now thirty-one years old. He is associated with his father, John H. Eggers, publisher of children's books at 471 Fourth Avenue, New York. On Park Avenue, near by, Jack Cleary has his office, having fully recovered from his wound. Eggers has kept in touch with his fighting comrades. Sergeant Williams, it seems, living in Buffalo, has never recovered from the shock of his experience, and Powers, one of the four boys in the shell hole that Sunday ten years ago, has lost the hearing of both ears. This, with the memory of O'Shea, of Willis, of others, has cast over Eggers a slightly somber veil.

He is a bit heavier than when he was a soldier, but, of course, still as tall!—a long, quiet, silent, young man of excessive modesty. I had a difficult time with him at first, and finally asked him curiously why he was so loath to talk of his war experience.

"Good lord," he said with a touch of impatience, "we have enough trouble forgetting it, without talking about it!

"It's just lately I've been able to stop dreaming about it," he murmured a while later. In a letter written to his parents some time after that battle of September 29th I found this passage: "It is the

hardest thing in the world to go into action with your friends and have them stricken down without being able to do a thing for them."

When I saw Latham, who is a smiling, joyous character, I thought at first I should not have this same trouble. But I did. On the surface he seemed free, but he was not yielding much. I taxed him with holding out.

He went silent. Then, strangely enough, he used Egger's word, "forget." "You see," he half apologized, "I've been trying to forget the thing all this time."

"But why?" I asked. "I do the opposite. I look back a good deal and try to remember. Why do you try to forget?"

He pondered a moment. Then, "While over there, did you kill men?" he asked.

I was only a correspondent over there. "No," I admitted.

"Well, maybe that's the difference," he said slowly.

Sandy-haired, blue-eyed, not quite so tall as Eggers and more stocky, Latham lives in Stamford, Connecticut, where he has a flower shop. He is married to a charming young woman, once Miss Alice Witman Nash, and has two lusty, golden-

haired children, a girl of eight and a boy of three and a half. The boy swatted me on the nose with his Teddy Bear, when, in the half-darkened room where he had been placed to go to sleep, I made a playful lunge at him. The smoothness of the retort was eloquent of a remarkable muscular coördination; the same, probably, which made his father such a good shot with a Hotchkiss.

Previously to that, I had visited Latham's Flower Shop. Latham was out; Alice Nash Latham was holding the fort. It was spring; Easter was near; the whole world had suddenly decided it wanted flowers, plants and seeds; and the Congressional Medalist was out, searching the nurseries for what the whole world was imperiously demanding of his helpmate in the almost empty shop. Latham came in, finally, his machine laden. But he must go out again for more. I went with him.

I thought that morning that a florist's life was a happy life. You ride around in an automobile through sweet green country, pause in seed gardens and in nurseries, and pile into an automobile loolonbula and ziligiphones and other beautiful, fragrant masterpieces of God with strange ugly names. And sometimes the nursery man is an Italian, with a cool jug in a dark nook. And wherever you walk or

ride, people seem glad to see your pleasant face, and people hail you: "Hello, John.—How are you, John?" But maybe that's partly because you are a medalist.

When we came back to the shop, the faërie person holding the fort told us that Colonel Head-up-in-the-air had telephoned asking furiously for his loolonbula. Well, we had forgotten to get any loolonbula. We had got ziligiphones and tremblororosas but no loolonbulas.

Consternation. The Congressional Medalist rubbed his sandy hair.

"You must call the colonel up," said Alice Nash Latham firmly.

"Gee-ee! I'm not going to call him up!"

"You must. You must call him up and tell him you haven't them."

"Gee, Alice—I'm not going to call him up."

"Coward!" she said.

The Medalist rubbed his head again. "I know," he suggested. "*You* call him up."

So she called up Colonel Head-up-in-the-air and told him there were no loolonbula.

Private John Joseph Kelly

PRIVATE KELLY

The Citation

John Joseph Kelly, Private 78th Company, 6th Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, 2nd Division. At Blanc Mont Ridge, France, October 3, 1918. Ran through our own barrage one hundred yards in advance of the front line and attacked an enemy machine gun nest, killing the gunner with a grenade, shooting another member of the crew with his pistol, and returning through the barrage with eight prisoners.

JOHN JOSEPH KELLY, called Johnnie by all his friends, was eighteen years old when war was declared and he enlisted with the Sixth Marines. He was five feet five inches in height and one hundred and twelve pounds in weight, but this was all dynamite because his father, Edward Jarlach Kelly, was from Tuame, in Ireland, and his mother, Beatrice Lally Kelly, from the county Galway in Ireland, and because Johnnie had been born and raised in the Chicago South Side where only those survive whose wits are fine-triggered, and fists precise, and soul a bit hell-strengthened.

When I left Johnnie after spending a week with him in Chicago, ten years after the war, he and his brother Mike saw me off. As we stood by the steps of the train and the moment of departure approached, they became nervous. "It will be starting on you," they warned.

"I'll jump it," I boasted. "I am of the generation that can jump off and on a train or a car without stopping it. A train ran through our town when I was a kid: I spent that time of my life jumping on and off—"

Their gray eyes (they both have gray eyes) lit up under their long lashes (they both have long lashes: they are black Irish, with the diabolical appeal of the kind). "*We* spent that period of our lives," said Mike, "jumping off trains, *with coal*."

"To keep the home fires burning," said Johnnie.

I gather that Johnnie's youth in the Chicago South Side was not sterile of excitement. There is in him a natural and delicate courtesy, a grace. A dash of the poet about him. He has a strange round way of pronouncing the word "beautiful" which makes the thing he points out twice as beautiful. While I was with him he was ever doing this: "Look at that cat, Jimmie. Isn't it beeautifulll." A long contemplation of the cat. "Look at that

green, Jimmie" (the green of the golf club where he caddied as a boy). Isn't it beeautifulll!" And after a thunderstorm: "I love the rain, Jimmie. Look how it has washed out the air. Look at those trees," tenderly, "all bright and clean—*aren't* they beeautifulll!"

And then we would pass the door of a café, which would remind him of one of his long string of extravagant fights. In that café he was sitting when a sailor came in and sat at his table. The sailor said something uncomplimentary, vigorously so, of the Marines; and Johnnie (it was with the Marines he fought during the war) said silkily, "Over in Belleau Wood, in France, there are still a lot of Marines. What you said just now—you don't mean it of *them*, do you?"

"Yes," said the sailor, "they can go —— themselves too." The blank stands for a verb much used in the Army. In fact, at times, during the war it was the only Army verb.

"Yes," said Johnnie, "and you, you'd —— —— —— ——."

Right there on the sidewalk, two years after it had happened, the scene once more vivid before his eyes, his body taut with the old vehemence, Johnnie repeated what he had said to the sailor.

The terrifying strength of those words! The virulent reiteration, calculated to inflame, to maddden. Defiance, utter and unreserved, with no bridge left behind, of a man by a man. Old Homer at his best!

Johnnie and the sailor adjourned to the lot behind the café. Johnnie had been out of the army eight years, and had not been living any particularly ascetic existence. He was overweight; his one hundred and forty pounds were soft. The sailor weighed about a hundred and eighty, all hard. Johnnie fought him for an hour, drove the teeth out of his head, broke his nose, and made him apologize to the Marines of Bouresches and Belleau Wood.

Beneath the silk of his gracious manner, there lurks a vehemence like trinitrotoluol.

At sixteen Johnnie left home and joined a traveling circus. But he was home again when the war broke. His father was dead; the family now consisted of the mother and four sons.

The oldest son, Jim—James Jarlach—had already been serving in the National Guard. He immediately went into the regular army, with the grade of captain. The second son, Tom—Thomas Francis—enlisted in aviation, becoming a lieutenant

aviator. The third son, Mike—Michael Anthony—enlisted in the Intelligence Service, a sergeant.

There remained only Johnnie. When he went to his mother to say he wanted to enlist, Beatrice Lally Kelly was touched with wistful weakness. "You are going to leave me alone, Johnnie?" But immediately she caught at herself: "I'm glad to see you doing it, Johnnie."

And Johnnie enlisted in the Sixth Marines.

§

He was eighteen years old, five feet five tall, and weighed one hundred and twelve pounds. He had a gentle face, gray eyes with long lashes; and when crossed he was a wildcat.

He trained in Paris Island, South Carolina, and in Quantico, Virginia—the hard training needed to bring a rooky up to the severe standard of the devil dogs. On August 20 he became a private in the Seventy-eighth Company of the Sixth Marines. The Sixth and Fifth Marines together with the Ninth and Twenty-third regiments of the regular army, became the infantry of the Second Division. Early in February, 1908, the division landed in France. On Saint Patrick's day, entraining and hik-

ing to the Verdun sector, it entered real trenches for the first time, and Private Kelly celebrated both the day and the deed by getting well jingled. There, in the trenches of the Verdun sector, he reached his third court-martial.

"Why so many court-martials?" I asked him.

His eyes lit up. "Oh, mostly fighting!"

"Did you fight much?"

The light in his eyes increased. "I guess I fought about every son-of-a-cook in that company," he said with satisfaction.

"Besides," he added plaintively, "I was nearly always late at roll call. No matter how much I tried," he waxed pathetic, "I'd be late at roll call."

They dock pay at those courts-martial. After the armistice, when Johnnie got his accrued pay for eight months' constant fighting, it amounted to five francs. The franc, it must be said, was worth fifteen cents at that time.

When, on June 2, near Château Thierry, the Second Division spread itself across the Germans' road to Paris, Johnnie had become a "runner." His job was to stick with the captain of his company and to sally forth along skirmish lines, or along winding guts, or across shell-drenched, bullet-swept spaces, with messages that must reach their destination at

all cost. I used to see runners when I was a war correspondent. I'd be in the captain's dugout, snug and warm and safe, the sound of bursting shells outside coming in muffled, as if striking in cotton wadding far away. "Runner!" the captain would say and "Runner!" his aide would bawl through the dugout curtain and out of the enveloping night a slim young soldier would leap in, landing on both feet, hand at salute. For a moment he would stand there, blinking in the light; for a moment in that quiet, warm, snug, lit, deep place; then out he would slip with the message, into the blackness, into the rain, the cold and the mud, the bullets and the shells. Johnnie, nineteen years old, five feet five, weight one hundred and twelve pounds (no, he weighed only a hundred and six by that time), lean as a gutter cat, fast as a greyhound, was a runner.

From June 2 to June 9 his company, in exposed position, living on hard tack and raw bacon, fought off the Germans, ferociously trying to force to Paris. A runner is a bit of a free lance. On June 3 Johnnie carried back his first wounded. The man's legs had been blown off. Johnnie tried to carry him on his back, could not make the grade, and finally bore him away in a poncho. There was in the swirl of this fighting an old farm still inhabited by the

peasant farmer and his wife; Johnnie found ladders there, cut them up into lengths, and used these as stretchers for other wounded. All this between carrying messages. On June 9 his company was relieved—and Johnnie cut down from a rafter in the garret of La Sens farm the little bird-like body of the peasant farmer's wife. The man had vanished; she had hanged herself. On June 13 up again went the Seventy-eighth company; and in attempting the relief of the Fifth Marines, was caught in a box barrage of gas shells and shrapnel which practically annihilated it, all being killed, wounded, or gassed except eleven—of whom Johnnie Kelly. Replacements were rushed up, and on June 25 the company was up once more, on a hillside, facing the enemy. Barbed wire entanglements were set up. On June 29 Johnnie, while carrying up a great roll of barbed wire, was struck in the thigh by a piece of explosive shell and was "glad of it." He was "all in." The company, lately replenished, was looking again, he said, like "a raggedy-arsed platoon."

For his work carrying messages in this bedlam, John Kelly got the first of the four silver stars that shine on his Victory Medal ribbon, and from the French the following citation, which gave him the Croix de Guerre.

"The General Commander in Chief of the French Armies of the North and Northwest, cites in the orders of the Regiment Jack Kelly, private U. S. Marines. Gave proof of the greatest courage and the greatest endurance in carrying orders to advanced positions, under a violent fire of artillery and machine guns."

But he had found time for other things. For being court-martialed a fourth time, for instance. During one of the short stays to the rear his sergeant was riding him. "Why, Jimmie"—so he told it to me ten years later—"he was making me pick up little pieces of paper out of the trench!" He placed his thumb and index finger close. "Little bits of paper no bigger than that!"

"What did you do?"

"I told him to go —— himself!"

Having said this to his sergeant, John was taken to the captain, who said, "Two-thirds for three months." Which meant that two-thirds of John's pay was to be docked for three months.

The boy, in revolt at this injustice and heaviness of power, knelt in the trench and called a curse down upon Sergeant Bo (that is not his name). "Hear me, God!" he screamed up to the sky. "Listen to me, God! I'm going to kill Sergeant Bo!"

I wish you could have heard him repeat this ten years later at midnight in a Chicago park. A little cold bubble ran up my spine. (The sergeant, horrified, ran back to the captain.)

"Did you really mean it?" I asked of Johnnie in the Chicago park.

His eyes grew black. "Absolutely." Then he smiled his Irish smile. "But I didn't do it, Jimmie," he confided. "We're good friends now. He lives just a little way from here."

Back along the hospital route went wounded Johnnie, and finally landed at Montfort-Aux-Clercs, an old monastery near Bordeaux. This is the famous wine district. Vineyards all about, wine all about. "And they wouldn't let us have a drop," even now wails Johnnie Kelly.

So, with his wound still partly open, he ran away to Paris and had a gorgeous time for a blessed thirteen days, upon which he reported at the famous building of the rue Sainte Anne, where he was lucky enough to come upon a not too meticulous officer who gave him transportation back to his outfit, instead of to the calaboose, which it could have been. The wound of that Chicago boy, a bit slow to improve in the monastery, had rapidly and completely healed as he coursed the Paris streets.

Back into Seventy-eighth Company, Sixth Marines, he appeared, which meanwhile had been through the battle of Soissons—the only battle he was to miss. And on September 12, still a runner, he went over with it at Saint Mihiel. The Sixth Marines was in support; there was not much to be done, except by the runners, scurrying about with orders and reports. As the company reached its objective, the town of Thiaucourt, Johnnie, marauding cat, discovered the whereabouts of two machine guns which were severely damaging the advance. They were in a stone house of a corner of the town. He did not have to do anything further about it. He pointed them out; his comrades did the rest.

But three days later, moving forward again to establish a front line, as the Seventy-eighth Company reached the crest of a hill at dawn, the Germans let go with all they had. Into shell holes everybody went. There was no artillery support, the fire was terrific, the machine bullets came like handfuls of rice. Johnnie's captain, Woodward, was shot in the leg, stood up, was shot in the body. He was just from the hospital. "Just my luck, Johnnie," he growled. "No sooner get into action than I'm out again." One by one all the officers were killed or wounded. Two hours passed on that fire-swept

crest, the company steadily dwindling. Johnnie, crawling around in search of an officer that could still stand, finally found one—who wasn't; who was only a non-com, Sergeant Bogan.

"Sergeant," said Johnnie, "all the officers are wounded or dead. We can't stay in this: we've got to get out or go forward." "All right," said Sergeant Bogan, "we'll attack." So Bogan took the right of what was left of the company, and Johnnie took the left, and these ragged remains attacked. In the swirl, Johnnie and sixteen men were surrounded as they lay among rocks. They had rifles, they had grenades, they had a Chauchat automatic; they hurled back three attacks; there were only eight men left.

Johnnie, in a little patch of brush, was feeding the Chauchat for a corporal who was acting as gunner, when the latter collapsed on the gun. Johnnie rolled him off and operated the gun himself. Fifteen minutes later, in a lull, he examined the dead corporal, calling over a big recruit to man the gun. The corporal's helmet seemed singularly tight on his head; Johnnie pried it off, found the eyes puffed and bruised—and the dead man began to stir. A bullet or piece of shell, without piercing the helmet, had jammed it tight on him, had made a vise of it about

his skull. Johnnie dragged him out into the sun, and just then a shell dropped square on the poor big recruit left at the gun.

Johnnie ran over there. The man seemed to have a thousand wounds, he seemed to be hanging together by threads, but he was alive and conscious. From behind, Lieutenant Adams broke through with men and reorganized the line. Another enemy attack was broken; the marines could not be got out of the rocks. Stretcher bearers came up; Johnnie got two bayonets, and with these, with pieces of wood, with scabbards, made splints to hold the big recruit together. The recruit was still conscious. "How do you feel, buddy?" asked Johnnie.

"Pretty good. Give me a cigarette."

Johnnie lit a cigarette and put it to the man's lips, but the blood drenched it out.

"You're a big boy. The stretcher bearers will get you through. You certainly've got lots of guts, buddy."

"Just trying to be a marine," the recruit said.

"Grab him, get him a-going," said Johnnie to the stretcher bearers, and went back to his fighting.

For this day's work Johnnie got the second of

the four silver stars he wears on his Victory Medal Ribbon.

The third came to him in the fighting on Blanc Mont ridge in the Champagne in early October; and with it the Army Congressional Medal of Honor, and with it the Navy Congressional Medal of Honor.

I had been with Johnnie several days before I got him to tell me of this. My handicap was that, as we went about the Chicago South Side together, every now and then we would pass some place which would remind him of some incident in his not exactly stagnant past, and then he would have to tell me of that combat instead of the one that had given him the Medal of Honor. There is something in Johnnie of the poet; there is in him a stormy vehemence that pours out easily into a hot lava of expressive words. I was not having a bad time listening, but I wasn't getting my story.

Friends of his, sensing my fix, came to me with helpful suggestions. I adopted one, which was to get him tight. It didn't work. He did talk; but when I got out my notes the next morning, they looked like Assyrian hieroglyphics, and seemed to have been put down from right to left and from down up. I couldn't read them at all.

But a few days later, as we sat at midnight on a bench in one of the city's parks, I suddenly found myself treated to a dramatic spectacle. Johnnie Kelly, on the deserted midnight lawn, was reacting for me the mad heroic deed of ten years ago.

There had been to this act a preface, or preliminary, which was not bad in itself. On October 1, near dusk, the division took over the lines near Somme Puy from the exhausted French. Johnnie was acting as guide to the company, behind an old French sergeant who was telling him, "*Mitrailleuse ici, mitrailleuse là,*" pointing this out, pointing that out, in the labyrinth of shallow trenches. Terrific fighting had been going on here; the French had driven forward twelve kilometers with hand grenades and had been almost annihilated; the trenches, darkening with the approaching night, were full of dead, and the old French sergeant, with his beard and his rounded back, seemed to be all that was left of all Frenchmen.

Two things there were which Johnnie specially noticed. In a niche cut into a parapet a line of French soldiers sat on an earthen bench; they were all dead; the one in the center, a grenade still in his hands, had had the top of his head blown off, so

that the brain lay plain to sight in the pan. The second thing was the tireless struttering of a machine gun near by. "*Mitrailleuse ici,*" the old Frenchman said, pointing toward the sound, but with such a lack of precision that Johnnie knew the gun had not been located. "Why, Jimmie," he said to me, "that ——ing gun was right on top of us!"

Both things soon moved him to action—the first, for a little joke. Sergeant Schreiber came storming into the trench looking for his men. "Where are my men? Where are my men?" "Why, there's a whole gang of them over there," said Johnnie, pointing to the gruesome little assembly in the niche, now indistinct in the growing night. "Get them for me," said Schreiber. "Get them yourself," said Johnnie. The unsuspecting sergeant went over, groped for his men, and as luck would have it, placed his hand upon the dead soldier's uncovered brain. "I laughed like hell," said Johnnie.

Then just as Johnnie thought he would get a little sleep, Lieutenant Fowler came along. "Jesus Christ—we're all out of Chauchat ammunition. Why don't you get me some?"

"I will," said Johnnie. Fowler had meant that he should go to the rear for some, but Johnnie crawled instead into No Man's Land, where there were

not only clips of ammunition but dead men's musettes, and came back with twenty-one clips of ammunition—and some bread and chocolate. "Had a little feed," said Johnnie.

All night he was coursing with messages, but at dawn his attention turned back to the second thing which had interested him when he had come into the position. The German machine gun, so close somewhere, had been firing all night. At Johnnie's suggestion, a little party was organized, consisting of Lieutenant Fowler, Lieutenant Kidder, who was killed the next day, Corporal Philblad, who was also killed the next day, and Johnnie. As they crawled along shallow trenches toward the sound of the gun Johnnie led the way, because he was smaller, more lithe and sinuous. He would crawl ahead till he came to a turn of the trench, then stick his head around the corner with infinite care, make sure the new stretch visible ahead was clear, then wriggle around the turn while the others followed. Finally he came to a corner heaped with French dead, and knew he must be near. Examining carefully the slain, he saw that one of the men, facing straight down the trench, had been shot right between the eyes; he knew then the gun must be enfilading this very trench. He stuck his head around

the corner slowly, slowly—and there it was, a concrete pill-box, at the end of the trench.

The party took the overhead route, circled, got behind the pill-box, and Johnnie took a quick run and dropped a bomb into the vent hole at the top.

The next morning at daybreak the company "went over," in the first wave of the division's attack for the crest of Blanc Mont. (Here is where Johnnie, on the lawn of a deserted Chicago park at midnight, began to act the thing out for me.)

As he had told me before, almost wistfully, in a part explanation of the frequency of his courts-martial, at roll calls he was always late; no matter how much he tried, he was always late. Well, this morning, when came the sonorous roll call of the barrage, he was deep in a dugout, dead to the world, his shoes off. Scrambling for his equipment, he overturned the candle he had lit, and in the darkness, wildly groping, could not find it. Neither could he find his glasses.

"What glasses?" I said.

"Beeeautifulll glasses, Jimmie, I had got from an Austrian officer at St. Mihiel!"

Finally he had to make the sacrifice. Out of the

dugout he popped, leaving the beautiful glasses behind. And up ahead, spread thin, his comrades were advancing, "leaning up" against the barrage.

"That's the way we'd go, Jimmie, we old regulars. Leaning up against the barrage. A few of us might get killed by our own shells, but when the Germans came out of their dugouts after the barrage had rolled over them, we'd be right on top of them, almost as soon as the ——ing barrage."

So Johnnie, running, lacing up his shoes as he ran, caught up to his captain. The company was advancing steadily, behind a barrage which made a roaring wall from earth to sky; but through the barrage, as if through a torn curtain, machine gun bullets came softly hissing, and men were dropping here and there.

After a little while Johnnie's captain sent him along the line with the order to keep to proper intervals—five paces apart. Under a fire as heavy as the company was meeting, even veterans have a tendency to bunch up. Down the line went Johnnie, dashing here and there like a fox terrier, giving the order.

Then the company was stopped. A machine gun nest square in front of them, from behind that

roaring curtain ahead, was spitting at them such a spiteful, such a venomously accurate sprinkle of buzzing lead that their legs were being cut from under them. They were immobilized and the barrage was beginning to draw away.

Johnnie took a bomb out of the little bag he always carried. He removed the pin. When you take the pin out of such a grenade a lever is released, and ten seconds after that the bomb explodes. But Johnnie, having taken the pin out, kept the lever down by the simple expedient of holding the bomb tightly squeezed in his hand.

This was his right hand. In his left hand he grasped his automatic pistol. Then, bomb in one hand, automatic in the other, he ran lightly forward, on through the barrage, through the hell and storm of bursting shell which is a barrage.

"That's what the citation says," he here said confidentially to me. "That I ran through the barrage. As a matter of fact I got *caught* in the barrage, Jimmie. I snooped too far forward looking for that machine gun, and got in the barrage. Then I figured it was no farther through the barrage forward than back, and I went on through the barrage. It was just intelligence, Jimmie, not bravery. I just figured it out, that's all."

Out of the smoke, the crash of the barrage, Johnnie emerged, lone pioneer, on the enemy side.

Up ahead the acrid battle haze was caught by a swirl of wind; it left for a moment a clear space, and within the clear space a shovel-helmeted German soldier appeared on the run. Automatic pointed, Johnnie halted him; and the German went to his knees, raised his hands, and began to pray for life.

Johnnie, all ready to kill, hesitated. No moment this to embarrass one's self with a prisoner. Johnnie believed he ought to kill. But the face under the heavy grim helmet was that of a boy; the boy was on his knees praying for life. Johnnie, poised, automatic in left hand, bomb raised in the other, hesitated, tempted to give the boy a chance.

As he stood thus, hesitant (this was all a matter of the most rapid of moments), the kneeling boy smoothly turned his head to the right.

(Johnnie had been acting all this out for me on the lawn of the Chicago park at midnight. He had run low through the barrage. He had stood like some breathing statue, with automatic on German and bomb ready. Then had got down on his knees and become the German boy. He slowly turned his head now: imperceptibly almost, the eyes go-

ing a little farther than the head, then both quickly coming back.)

"Immediately," said Johnnie, "I knew that what had drawn his eyes was something of importance to him. And if it was of importance to him, it was of still more importance to me. So holding him as he was with a jerk of my automatic, I snatched a quick look sidewise. And there was the machine gun, Jimmie!—the machine gun that had been holding us up. In a shell hole to my left! And the gunner had turned it up in the air and was just slamming it down again to get it a-going at me."

Johnnie pivoted, brought down his automatic, and killed the gunner on his piece. Then going to his left knee he hurled the bomb, the lever abruptly released from the squeeze of his hand, precisely into the center of the nest, and ran forward. A mangle was beneath him of killed and wounded; through the smoke, hands came up surrendering.

(He had continued to act it all out for me on that midnight lawn. He had looked quickly to the left, had seen the machine gun; like lightning he had shot, like lightning he had gone to his knee in the beautiful gesture of the grenade-throw; like a wildcat he had pounced upon the destroyed machine gun nest. And I thought, "This happened ten

years ago; he was lighter then, he was twice as fast as now; what acted then was the vibrant hard kernel of what he now is." I thought, "What a beautiful performance it was that happened there that day, behind the curtain of the barrage, out of sight of his comrades, invisibly, in loneliness!")

Johnnie covered the bleeding remnants of that machine gun crew, jumped them out of their pit, picked up his first prisoner, rounded up everybody, and—"*Allez! Allez! Allez!*"—started them on the run toward his own lines.

A barrage remains cataracting upon one spot for, say, a minute or a minute and a half, then is jumped forward, say fifty yards, to hold there another minute or minute and a half (Johnnie does not remember just at what rate this particular barrage was traveling: he had seen so many barrages in his young life!) As they crouched low the barrage lifted over them. Johnnie got them going again ("*Allez! Allez! Allez!*") And out of the smoke and the crackle Johnnie and his nine prisoners came loping into the laps of the advancing Seventy-eighth Company. "Well, I got the ——ing gun," said Johnnie as he passed through, using the great army verb; and the others, pressing forward to lean up once more against the barrage, laughed, and

perhaps for a second followed the kid with their eyes, as, driving his lumbering catch before him, he trotted along toward the rear, tireless, light of foot and slim.

"Well," said Johnnie, finishing his story, "I delivered my prisoners (first I frisked them a little bit), then I went to the mess kitchen and got a bite to eat from Mess Sergeant Tom Jones. And that was my day's work; that's how I got my M. H. THAT's all there was to it, Jimmie."

But besides the M.H., or Army Congressional Medal of Honor, he had earned that day the Naval Congressional Medal of Honor, the Croix de Guerre with palm and the Medaille Militaire, the Italian Merito di Guerra, the Montenegrin War Cross, and a third silver star for the ribbon of his Victory Medal.

"And, Jimmie," he resumed, "here's something I often think. Put that down, Jimmie:

"I gave that kneeling kid behind the barrage a break, and I got a break. If I had killed him he wouldn't have turned his head, and I wouldn't have seen the machine gun and I would have been killed. But I spared him, and he turned his head, and I saw the machine gun. I gave a break and I got a break.

And that's the way it always is. If you give a break, you get a break. Put that down, Jimmie."

Here it is—down.

§

Next, Johnnie was in the Argonne, where he won his fourth silver star. And this is the story of the lost citation. Johnnie was told he had been cited, but he has never been able to get hold of the citation. This teases him considerably. So he asked that what he did in the Argonne be put down, in the hope of thus bringing the lost citation out of the drawer, pigeon-hole, or file where it lies buried.

It was in the first days of November, in the thickest of the sanguinary and protracted battle since then known as the battle of the Argonne; the Second Division was driving along, and, in the first wave of its front, the Seventy-eighth Company, Sixth Marines. Johnnie, at the heels of his captain like a fox terrier, was sent by him with a message to the Eightieth Company which was driving to the left.

Johnnie set out, soon was beyond his own comrades, fell into a line of other men. "Is this the Eightieth!" he shouted. "Yes, it's the Eightieth,"

they shouted back. But there was something queer about them. Theirs were strange faces—and Johnnie knew many men of the Eightieth Company. He came upon a young corporal and his seven men, and for a moment watched them work; they didn't seem to be marines, they didn't work like marines. "Is this the Eightieth?" he asked again. "Yes, it's the Eightieth," said the corporal. "Eightieth what?" said Johnnie, his doubt increasing. "Eightieth Division," said the corporal.

This was a pretty how-de-do. The Eightieth Division—in its first battle—was driving to the left of the Second. In some way Johnnie had missed the Eightieth Company of the Sixth Marines, for which he had the message, had gone too far, and had strayed into the Eightieth Division. He was clear out of bounds—a serious matter for a runner. But Johnnie was the kind of a messenger boy who, though he stops on the way sometimes to play marbles, plays those marbles well and usefully. And now, as he stood talking to the corporal, watching the work of this very conscientious but rather green squad, suddenly a machine gun let go from somewhere, and about sixteen bullets went through the gas mask hanging at the ready upon his chest, while sixteen others zipped through folds of his uniform

which stuck out a bit on his back, while his slim body remained untouched between. Into a shell hole he dived to join the squad.

For forty-five minutes they were there, unable to move. A machine gun nest had them spotted. Whenever they raised a helmet at the end of a stick, bam, the helmet rang like a bell. And Johnnie's situation as a runner with a message was getting seriouser and seriouser.

Finally he raised his nose behind a rock and peered long and carefully. He saw a small puff of vapor, just one, rise out of bushes ahead. "I see the ——ing gun," he announced, for this was enough for his sharp experienced eyes.

He peered again. The machine gun nest was now enfilading the advance of the entire division to the left, and holding it up. Johnnie turned to the corporal and his squad. "Say," he said, "you fellows ought to grab that ——ing nest. It's holding up the whole shooting-match."

"How do you get a machine gun?" said the corporal humbly. "You tell us and we'll do it. We'll do anything you say."

"Give me that Chauchat," said Johnnie, beginning to play marbles.

The corporal passed him the Chauchat. There

were woods over to the right, affording shelter. "Tell your men to beat it over there," said Johnnie. The corporal did so and the men started crawling and running toward the woods.

"Load for me," Johnnie told the corporal. He sent the Chauchat automatic out before him, peered over, and began peppering the place he had carefully marked from the puff he had seen. As the corporal loaded, he was giving Johnnie the range. "A little higher—a little to the left. Now you've got it! You're plumb into it!"

The machine guns over there stopped with a choked splutter. Johnnie let go a few more hundred shots, then, "Let's beat it," he said, "before they shell us."

Taking the Chauchat, they started after the other men toward the woods, putting the gun down now and then, and firing a few clips to cover their movement. But their ammunition was used up before they were half way there. "Then we ran like hell," says Johnnie.

Once in the woods, Johnnie crawled to the edge, got near to the silenced machine gun nest, reached it. The tripods were still there, but the guns and the men were gone. But in the woods he had seen dug-

outs; he suspected they might not be empty. Back he went. "Bomb all those ——ing holes," he advised the corporal of the squad from the Eightieth Division, and selected a deep dugout for himself.

He peered down. "Heraus!" he shouted. No answer; silence. Johnnie took a grenade out of his precious little bag, pulled the pin, and hurled the bomb down into the dugout. A dulled explosion—groans. Johnnie followed the bomb.

In the deep and spacious chamber were six German soldiers and an officer. Four of the men had been wounded by the bomb, the officer badly so. Farther in the depths, where the explosion had crumbled a wall, a dead man lay, half buried. One hand, showing, had a ring on its finger. Johnnie got the ring later.

For the moment, however, there was else to do. He herded, before his leveled automatic, the six men to one end of the dugout. The officer on an earth bench was calling weakly, "Transportee! Transportee!"

"What did he mean?" Johnnie asked, as he told me this. "All through he kept crying, 'Transportee, transportee!' "

I don't know any better than did Johnnie what

that poor devil meant. Perhaps, feeling his life ebbing, and with still a hope that he might be saved if quick action were taken, he was weakly begging to be taken to the rear. Or perhaps he was trying to explain to that terrible young American that he and his men belonged to the transports. Perhaps he was asking indulgence, or weakly dealing out reproach.

But Johnnie had seen on the table a map case, maps, orders—valuable stuff to bring back to a captain to whom one must explain why the message to the Eightieth Company was still undelivered. Johnnie whisked the whole thing into his musette. But there was something else on that table: tin plates, cups, giving off aromatic steam. The German officer had just been sitting down to dinner when that bomb had come rolling down the steps.

Johnnie slapped his automatic down at one side of the tin-plate, a bomb on the other side, and, while the prisoners huddled humbly against the wall, and the dying officer weakly continued to cry "Transportee!" ate the dinner. Which consisted, he says, of a litre of wine, a litre of milk, horse steak, mashed potatoes, cold gravy, sawdust bread and artificial honey—the best meal he had had for some time.

Shells meanwhile had been dropping outside. Suddenly he saw the ears of the Germans prick up —and on went their gas masks. The shells were bursting with a telltale soft plop; they were gas. On went his own mask.

On went his mask, and it was a sieve. He had forgotten that it had been shot through and through a while before. But this was no time for consternation. Johnnie took three steps into the masked Germans, snatched a mask off a white face, and put it on. The mask, as he began to breathe, flapped to and fro against his face.

With the American mask, breathing is through the mouth; the mask does not flap; flapping means a mask out of order. The German mask, however, normally flaps. Johnnie, forgetting this, feeling the soft slap of the rubber against his cheek, snatched off the mask, flung it to the floor, and jerked another from another white face.

There he stood, masked, automatic in right hand, a bomb in the left, as slowly the dugout filled with gas as a sinking ship fills with the sea. One of the nude-faced prisoners threw himself upon the rejected mask; but there was one who remained with none.

When the shelling had stopped, Johnnie led his

prisoners out and to the rear. And then he went forward to find his company and his captain.

That is the story of the lost citation.

§

A few months later the Second Division, part of the Army of Occupation, was occupying an area about Coblenz. Johnnie was away from his company with a wood detail; he had been sent away off with a few others to cut wood. This was partly as a reward for the fact that he had gone all the way from the Meuse to the Rhine uproarious and under arrest, having too well celebrated the armistice. So he had fixed himself a nice nest under low overhanging brush, and was peacefully snoozing while the others hewed, when his name began to be called.

He stirred, he woke. Everyone was calling for him. His lieutenant passed near, calling. Johnnie made himself still smaller and snuggled down closer. "I thought he wanted me to cut some more of that ——ing wood," he said to me.

Finally the calls became so insistent he could not longer decently—nor safely—ignore them; and he emerged from the bushes. "For God's sake," yipped his lieutenant, "where in blazes have you been!

You're wanted in Coblenz to get your M.H.!"

A few days later Johnnie stood in a long line. To his right, the position of honor, stood just one man: Sergeant Cukela of the Fifth Marines, also up for a Congressional. And to Johnnie's left, in inferior position, was a whole line of fat generals, to receive D.S.C.'s and such negligible decorations. To Johnnie's left, as General Pershing pinned him, were four major generals, three brigadier generals, and three colonels.

Johnnie had grown by this time. He was now five feet six. But he had lost weight: he weighed just one hundred and six pounds.

§

And now, ten years after?

Well, Johnny is back in the old Chicago South Side; he lives on Cottage Grove Avenue. I think he has had trouble settling down since the war, as would be natural after such an odyssey. In 1920 he was on a ranch below the Mexican border, cowpunching. He beat his way back, walking half way across the dreaded Salton sink after being thrown from a freight car. There was a summer when he rented a cottage on the lake in Chicago, and he and a band of ex-soldiers did nothing but rest, eat, sleep

and play pranks. Some of their neighbors, mildly infuriated, would say, "For God's sake, don't you fellows ever work?" "Good soldiers never work between wars!" they'd shout back.

Then, five years ago, the physicians told Johnnie he had T.B. and had not more than three years to live. What follows does not make a very moral story. For Johnnie, having only three years to live, decided to live them drinking. For two years he went on drinking himself to death—and suddenly woke to the fact that he had got well and that it wasn't necessary to drink any more. The doctors pounded him and pounded him—they found him cured. Then he went into politics, the turbulent politics of Chicago. He is a Democrat, in William Hale Thompson's city. Which means that he is now out.

But he has read a good deal in these years, and pondered not a little; his naturally bright mind has ripened; to-day he is in the act of finding himself. It has taken ten years—why shouldn't it have taken ten years?

Corporal Jake Allex

CORPORAL ALLEX

The Citation

Jake Allex, Corporal, Company H, 131st Infantry, 33rd Division. At Chipilly Ridge, France, August 9, 1918. At a critical point in the action, when all the officers in his platoon had become casualties, Corporal Allex took command of the platoon and led it forward until the advance was stopped by fire from a machine gun nest. He then advanced alone for about thirty yards in the face of intense fire and attacked the nest. With his bayonet he killed five of the enemy; when it was broken, used the butt of his rifle, capturing fifteen prisoners.

IN the list of Army Congressional Medal of Honor men, Jake Allex stands nearly at the top, because the list is alphabetical and his name begins with an A. But as a matter of fact it does not begin with an A, for his name is not Jake Allex but Angelko Allex Mandushich, and he was born in old Serbia, near the almost sacred mountain, Shar Planina, a region at the time still under the domination of the Turk. The short of Angelko in Serbian is Jecco. This became Jake when he had come to

the United States, and there the Mandushich was dropped, so that Angelko Allex Mandushich became Jake Allex.

But that is not his only name. When I was looking for him in Chicago, I was directed to the William Hale Thompson municipal pump-house, which pumps water from the lake for the bathtubs and dry throats of the Windy City's citizens. I asked for Allex Mandushich; nobody knew him. I then asked for Sergeant Allex; nobody knew him. But suddenly someone's eyes lit up. "Oh, you mean Big Jake!" And I was taken outside and around the corner of the building, and there stood Big Jake, or Jake Allex, or Angelko Mandushich, Congressional Medal of Honor, an enormous man in cement-stained clothes, directing laborers who were laying a sidewalk. When the noon whistle blew we went into a little place, near by, where that which is pumped by the William Hale Thompson pump-house is used but little, and we had our first talk.

He was born July 13, 1887, in Streska, near Prizren, under Turkish rule. His father had a little ten-acre farm—sheep, a few cows, oxen and wooden plows. There were nine children in the family, six boys and three girls. From nine to eleven he went to school, for the only schooling he ever had. At

eleven he became a shepherd in the hills. And when he was eighteen he came to the United States, directly to Chicago, where he got work in a packing house.

He worked in the casing department, then in the slaughter house. Whenever in life we do some great deed, who can tell what went into the preparation of that great deed? Next he worked as beef loader, carrying chunks of beef of five or six hundred pounds on his back—by which his back was made very strong. In between he would compete in the athletic games of the Chicago parks, putting the shot, pole-vaulting, and once attaining the honor, as he naïvely puts it, of making the "world's record for third place in the high jump."

Meanwhile, true to Serbia's patriarchal customs, he was sending money to his father and mother, who in turn were taking care of their old parents. In 1900 they wrote they were pining to see their son once more, and back he went to the small old farm in Serbia. Here he found one important change. A little girl named Velika, with whom he had played when she was twelve years old, was now eighteen. He fell in love with her, courted her, married her. Then he settled down to be a Serb again.

But the Turks still ruled the land. In 1912 an edict was passed that all Serbs in Turkish territory must serve in the Turkish army—which meant probable fighting against their brothers in freed Serbia. A family council was held: the parents, the grandparents of Angelko; the parents, the grandparents of Velika. And that very night, leaving his young wife and his baby son, he set out with a guide and a dog. In two nights he tramped one hundred miles in the mountains and across the frontier into freed Serbia. Within a few days he was on the ocean, bound for the United States once more.

Back in Chicago, he went to work for the Morris Packing House, but when the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad began double-tracking to Aberdeen, he became foreman of a gang of sixty men working at the concrete of the tunnels. Meanwhile Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece had launched themselves into the war of liberation against the Turk. Three of his brothers were in the army over there; the support not only of his wife and child, but of his parents was on his shoulders. When he speaks of this period now, he slaps his forehead in self-disgust. "I should have gone to night school after work. I was just a young fool, a young fool!"

Nineteen-fourteen came, and the big war. Small

Serbia, after once hurling back Austria's solid armies, succumbed to a second double attack; the land was overwhelmed with Austrians, Bulgars and Turks; ravaged and pillaged. Allex lost all touch with his family. When, in 1917, America went to war, he had become a policeman in the private force of the Morris packing firm. A recruiting detail addressed the workers in the yard during the noon-hour. Allex, making up his mind quickly, found himself second in the line offering itself. The man ahead of him was telling the recruiting officer that he was married. The recruiting officer waved the man off. Then Allex stepped up, denied Velika, and said he was a bachelor!

"I was afraid they might not take me," he explained, telling me of this eleven years later.

"Why were you so anxious to go?" I asked, thinking that the first word of his answer would be Serbia.

But what he said, consideringly, his little eyes very piercing and blue in his broad face, was, "It was no more than right. This country had given me an opportunity to support my parents. The only way I could repay America was to offer my services."

"And how about Serbia?"

"Well, my thoughts were also working pretty hard over the distress of Serbia," he said soberly.

He enlisted in the old First Illinois, which became the 131st Infantry of the Thirty-third Division. He was six feet tall, weighed two hundred and seventeen pounds. He had worked in a packing house and had carried on his back hunks of beef weighing five or six hundred pounds. Now, while he was still in the first days of training camp, he showed something else that was in him.

He was guarding one day a prisoner who was "lickered up." The prisoner, with the cunning of the inebriate, complained of hunger, and Allex, out of human kindness but against the regulations, went out and brought him something to eat. As the prisoner, having quaffed a glass of water (he needed it), was setting the glass down, he suddenly changed the direction of his gesture, and brought the glass crashingly to the top of Allex's skull—then fled, slamming the door behind him. Immediately Allex was after him, through the door, without taking the trouble to open it, a part of the sash with him. The prisoner was a good runner; Allex was not gaining much on him. Snatching, as he ran, his bayonet out of the scabbard, he hurled it at the departing back—and just missed. On he

charged. The prisoner made for the streets (the camp was on Cicero Avenue in Chicago) and, towed by the force of bad habit, for a saloon. Through another door—a glass one this time—Allex went after his quarry, caught him in a corner, pounced upon him and started to beat him up. The place was in an uproar; they couldn't get the indignant Slav to let go. Officers appeared. "Let him go, let him go!" "I will not," roared Allex, heartily beating on, "he's *my* prisoner." It finally took twelve men to pry him off.

At Camp Logan, in Texas, he added once more to his equipment—skill with the bayonet. While a fair shot at slow firing with the rifle, he was rather a failure at rapid firing. No failure did he prove to be with what the French call the Rosalie. There were three instructors in bayonet drill, an American, an Englishman, a Frenchman. He didn't like the Englishman, but the Frenchman one day taught him a new trick. Allex, when we were wandering together in Chicago, described to me this new trick, but I am afraid I did not get it quite straight. As I remember, you stepped back quickly, then to the left, heeled your gun at an angle of forty-five degrees, and your opponent obligingly spitted himself on the offered point.

Anyway when came the bayonet tests—you charge out of the trench, run up a wall six feet high, jump down, stab a sandbag as you pass, run, jump a trench, sticking your long point into a second dummy on the fly and extricating it, jump an obstacle four feet high, barbed-wired, and with long point, short point, jab, pass on, then lie down and fire five shots—Big Jake broke the British record of forty-two seconds by a full four seconds.

The next day he sprained his ankle, which made him a little heavy on his feet, and at bayonet practice the British instructor derided him. "You're going about like an old woman," he said. Upon which Angelko Allex Mandushich challenged him to a tilt that would prove whether indeed he was an old woman. To it they immediately went before a delighted gallery. Bang, bang, bang, slither, they parried and thrust, not quite all in fun. And suddenly Allex Mandushich slipped over the French trick. The instructor stopped himself just in time, Allex's point at his chest.

"The Britisher didn't like it a little bit," now says Allex. But that is no way to speak of one of our late allies.

In May, 1918, the division landed in France, and

within twenty days was with the British Fourth Army in front of Amiens, which had nearly been taken by the Germans in their great March drive. There Jake Allex took part in a night patrol. An Australian officer one evening stuck his head into Allex's dugout and said, "We're going into No Man's Land after a machine gun. Any of you Yanks want to go with us?"

"I'll go," said Yank Angelko Allex Mandushich.

Out into the darkness the small party went, Allex following the Australian close. Rockets would go up, and they'd freeze along the ground. Darkness would return, and they'd crawl forward. The Australian seemed to have cat-eyes; he seemed to know where he was going.

"Stand fast," he finally said. He peered ahead; then Allex saw him take a bomb and throw it with care; take another, and throw it with care. There were two big explosions up ahead. "That did it," said the Australian. They stole forward again, and Allex saw an overturned and wrecked machine gun by a still, torn form; the rest of the crew had fled.

That little lesson should also be included, perhaps, in the sum of the equipment which was to be used later in the winning of the Medal of Honor; should

be added to toil in the slaughter house, and carrying five-hundred-pound hunks of meat, and bayonet duels, and recapturings of recalcitrant prisoners.

On the Fourth of July the Fourth Australian Division attacked to take the village of Hamel, a few miles east of Amiens, and four companies of the Thirty-third Division were chosen to fight with it. Big Jake's company, however, was not one of the chosen ones. "That hurt my feelings," Big Allex now says of this. "On the Fourth of July, too!"

But he was to get his chance soon. The war had turned. Down there on the Marne, Foch, making use freely of the embattled Americans, had wiped out the salient, directed like a poignard point against the ribs of Paris. Swiftly followed his second blow. On August 9 the British army—almost destroyed in March, rebuilt now—swept forward in the second Allied attack, that which Ludendorff later was to call Imperial Germany's black day. And with the Fifty-eighth British Division went the 131st Regiment of the Thirty-third American Division—Big Jake's regiment.

All night it marched. When morning came it was still marching. The day swept over the men as they still tramped, a furnace of a day under a copper sky. Big Jake Allex remembers that march well.

"The hardest night and day I ever spent in my life," he says. "A hot day, a long hike; fellows dropped, faces turned blue, eyes stood out like fried eggs."

The time of the attack had been fixed for half-past five in the afternoon. Noon went by, and then it began to look as if even this tremendous effort were failing, as if the regiment were going to be late for its rendezvous. Double time was called; the regiment started to run. For the last four miles it double-timed most of the way, stepping over British and German dead. On the run bayonets were fixed, formation by single file taken; on the run the regiment deployed, and, deployed, reached the jumping-off place. "What shall we do with our packs?" yelled a doughboy. "Throw them away!" yelled another; and plump, plump, plump went all the packs to the ground.

For a few minutes they were at a standstill, awaiting the zero hour. The regiment was between two British brigades; there had been no detailed reconnaissance. The objective for the night, with a large program to follow, was Chipilly Ridge, two thousand yards away. But all that the waiting men could see was a small abrupt rise fifty yards ahead—with mystery behind.

At five-thirty of this hot afternoon, still breath-

less from their double-timed march, they swept up in assault. Allex, a corporal, but this day acting as sergeant, was right-guide of his platoon of seven squads. Sergeant Brecky was to the left; Sergeant Dorman was platoon leader; and Lieutenant Pinto, just behind his men, his two runners at his sides, was in command.

The barrage had gone wrong here. There was practically no barrage. The men swept up the small hill. At the top was a level field for one hundred yards. And a storm of machine gun bullets and shrapnel. The platoon staggered across the field, men dropping at every step, then down a gully and up again. Half the platoon was already gone, "every other man knocked off," as Allex tells it. What remained pushed on; pushed on "into *some* situation," he says.

The German machine guns seemed to have every path and avenue of advance swept. The platoon kept on going. Over to the left, Sergeant Brecky dropped, shot through both legs. Over in front, Sergeant Dorman dropped, killed on the spot. Then Lieutenant Pinto fell, his left arm almost torn off.

Looking around, shaking his head like a bull, Big Jake Allex saw that he was now the platoon's ranking man. He leaped ahead of it. "Come on!" he bel-

lowed in the battle roar, and raised his hand and took command by plunging on. A little band of men followed him, all that was left of the platoon—seventeen men where there had been fifty.

Before them was another level stretch of about three hundred yards. Two men from some other company strayed up to Allex's side. They had gone about seventy-five yards when a shell struck square upon the two. And a lump of clay, taking Allex in the flank, felled him to earth, unconscious, blood spouting out of his nose, mouth and ears.

He came to himself a moment later with a feel of cold water sprinkled upon him sparingly from a canteen. "Don't waste water on the dead," said a remonstrating voice which Allex in his daze recognized as that of Corporal Mrozek, a Pole who had enlisted with him from Chicago.

"The Serb is gone," another voice announced.

Allex turned over, got up on one knee, then to his feet. "Come on," he said, and the platoon went forward in the buzz of bullets, the bursting of shells. It suddenly plumped into a trench full of the enemy.

"We were seventeen," says Allex, "and they were fifty. But we had gone mad with our many losses. We shot, we bombed, we bayoneted; we mopped

up the whole works; we didn't leave anything behind."

Only one more man had been lost. The surviving sixteen went on. Up to this time the hail of machine gun bullets had been coming from barrages of guns within the German positions. Now the platoon came in front of a hidden nest quite near. From its cover, not more than a hundred yards away, it was spitting spitefully. The earth before the platoon was alive with little volcanic spurtings; ricochets wailed by their ears: there was no passing here. Down plumped everyone, squirming into hollows of the ground; and once down, there was no getting up. The platoon had come to a dead stop.

"We were in a hell of a fix," Jake Allex said to me ten years later.

"Why?" I asked.

He looked at me as if I were an idiot. "Why, the units to the right and the left would be sweeping ahead! They'd be enfiladed! They'd be stopped! The whole advance would be stopped!"

The head of Angelko Mandushich, descendant of Serbian warriors, Chicago hog-butcher, set itself to work. Crawling about, he determined just about in what clump of rocks and behind what bushes the machine gun probably lay. Then he called two of

his men. One he sent on a wide circle to the right, the other on a wide circle to the left, with orders, once they had reached a position even with the machine gun nest, to pour ten rounds into it. Having thus arranged to give the machine gun crew some diversion, something to lift a little the single-minded concentration with which they were sprinkling the area immediately before them, Allex Mandushich, Big Jake, himself got under way.

"But why?" I said again, coming in with my why.

This time his eyes almost stuck out. "But I *told* you," he chided. "Those units to the right, to the left—they'd get into trouble—everything would be stopped. No"—he made a gesture with his hand, dismissing the subject—"it had to be done, that's all."

Big Jake got under way. Not circling to the right, not circling to the left, but by the shortest line between two points—straight ahead toward the spitting gun.

It was ticklish work. The distance was about a hundred yards; he carried his rifle, with bayonet fixed, his automatic (in its holster) and three grenades (in his pockets). It was mostly, it was all, crawling. At first there was a shallow and intermit-

tent communication trench, just about deep enough to keep his back from showing. This pinched out, and he went on along the bottom of a little ravine, low, making from rock to rock, from bush to bush, infinitely careful to keep his sinister approach undivined.

On he crawled, warily, undetected. Finally he could see the slight crescent-shaped rise of the parapet of the trench within which the machine gun nested. About thirty yards from the nest, there was a little bush. He made for that, slowly, like a worm, and finally reached it—thirty yards from the gun —still undetected.

He laid his rifle down before him, he laid the three grenades in a row before him. In the machine gun trench there seemed to be some sort of agitation. "The jerries seemed excited." Had they seen him? Were they sensing his approach? He was perhaps advancing into a cunning trap.

From the right, from the left, came the sound of rifle shots. His two men, in position, were firing their ten rounds. The moment had come.

It might be said now that the charging of a machine gun nest is no child's play; that once started, it is something that must be carried on with

no hesitation, with the utmost speed, resolution, and ruthlessness; that, with the first gestures made, one has begun a lightning chain of accelerated movements which must not be broken by the smallest wavering or softened by the least delicacy. Allex had come to the instant when he must make that first gesture.

"I came near not doing it," he told me ten years later. "I had a moment of doubt. Sweat was in my eyes, my heart was beating like a trip hammer, my ears were roaring.

"Then I said to myself: 'Yes, by God, I'm going to do it!' "

And he did it.

He took the pin out of the first grenade, he hurled the grenade. Thirty yards it went, and exactly into the center of the machine gun nest. He snatched the pin out of the second grenade and threw that. This time he was not so successful. The bomb hit the parados of the trench. In a way the moral effect was even greater—the tremendous explosion, unmuffled, in the open; the geyser of smoke and earth; "it huddled them," he says now. Then he threw the third, which, like the first, lit into the very core of the position.

Now was the moment to follow vigor with vigor. Picking up his rifle, bayonet fixed, Angelko Allex Mandushich charged after his bombs. It takes a few seconds for a grenade to explode; he was half way there as the third grenade roared in the trench's close confine. And then he was on the parapet, the overturned gun at his feet, a swarm of men at his feet. Three were dead; the rest, like buzzing bees, were pressed together into a corner of the trench.

Into that huddle Angelko Allex Mandushich set to work with his bayonet—Angelko Mandushich, he who had worked once in the slaughter house, he of the back made strong with carrying quarter-ton hunks of beef; Big Jake, six feet tall, two hundred pounds in heft, shot-putter, pole-vaulter, world's record holder for third place in the high jump; he of the bayonet school; Angelko Mandushich, son of Serbian warriors, for centuries baiters of the Turk. Down and down and down and down, and down again, into the huddle went his terrible point, backed by his terrible weight and his terrible strength. "I was getting into the soft parts," he says now. "You know—the soft parts." Four times he sank his long steel into soft parts. But on the fifth prod he struck something else. "It must have been his hip bone," he says now. "He

squirmed as I struck and my bayonet went against the hip bone; that broke the bayonet."

His bayonet broken, Allex reversed his gun, and brought the butt down upon the huddle like a great mallet. But by this time the boy he had sent to the right and the boy he had sent to the left had run up; the platoon had swept up. Standing in a circle behind Big Allex they looked almost awesomely down into the gory nest. One man had done that. Three bodies lay there torn by bombs; four bodies lay there pierced by bayonet; one body lay there with head bashed in by butt of gun. And about the heap, fifteen prisoners, pale and shaken, were weakly surrendering.

"And then," says Allex, "for the first time I remembered my automatic. There it was along my leg, in its holster. I had forgotten all about my automatic!"

§

The platoon swept on. That night the regiment swarmed over Chipilly Ridge, its objective. The next day it charged forward again, and the next day, and the next and the next.

Nor was this to be all for Allex. He was still to see St. Mihiel and the Argonne: four battle clasps are on the ribbon of his Victory Medal. But this is

how he got his Congressional Medal of Honor. In his first battle—in a hurry.

§

And now?

Well, I found Angelko Allex Mandushich, war hero, at the William Hale Thompson municipal pump-house, in Chicago, foreman of a gang of men laying down concrete. He stood there above them with legs apart, as if straddling a trench, his old flapping hat worn at a truculent angle.

He is an enormous man; he weighs two hundred and sixty-eight solid pounds. And a magnificent eater. In every gastronomical encounter I had with him he bested me easily, three to one. And a still more superb beer quaffer is he. When the stein has been passed across the polished bar to Allex Mandushich, you need not watch him to know when he has drunk. You can turn your back on him. In a moment you hear a little hiss, like steam escaping from a heated machine gun, and the glass bangs back to the mahogany, empty, asking for more.

He is much Americanized, but underneath still lurks the Slav temperament, with eddies of gayety and of melancholy. After a few glasses he is apt to burst into song: American songs, and then,

if you insist, fine old Serb hymns—and he has a full, deep, resonant baritone voice and a true ear; it is somewhat of a tragedy that no operatic impresario ever caught him while it was still time.

Then, in the midst of joy and song he will sigh big and speak of his troubles, of his insoluble troubles.

He had his big moment after the war. As, at the head of his platoon, he marched down Michigan Boulevard, with the returned Thirty-third Division, on June 3, 1919, Mrs. Morris, wife of the owner of the packing house where he had worked before the war, ran out and placed about his shoulders a great floral wreath. The next day Morris made him lieutenant in the private police. There followed a period of intoxicating glory. Much was being made of him. He was young, he was strong, he was famous: I have no doubt that the gentle sex showed a special appreciation of the big man with his halo of deeds of an almost ferocious bravery.

But soon news began to come from war-ravaged Serbia, where were his wife and his child, his parents and his grandparents. The farm had been sacked; they were poor, they were starving. Allex Mandushich decided he must go back. The Morris packing firm gave him a thousand dollars, and he

was told that his place as lieutenant in the private police would be held for him till he return. He sailed away happily. What he found in the farm of far Serbia tallied with what the letters had described. Successive invasions had passed over and through the farm. Gone were the kine, the oxen, the sheep, the goats, the fowl; the house was bare of all furniture, the sheds were bare of plows. The thousand dollars went fast, buying new stock, new tools. His allotment pay, arriving now, went the same way.

The obvious thing to do was to return to America, where he could be lieutenant of the Morris private police, with good pay. He returned: to meet disaster. The Morris Packing Company had sold out to the Armours. When Jake Allex asked for his lieutenancy of police, he was offered the rank and pay of private—which he refused in a regrettable gesture of pride.

He has been a laborer ever since,—mining, mucking, digging—till a little while ago he became foreman of construction in the department of public works of the bureau of engineering of the city of Chicago. He gives you his budget readily. He makes nine dollars a day for five and a half days a week. His union dues cost sixteen dollars a year; the Serbian Lodge

costs thirty-six; the American Legion, four; the Veterans of Foreign Wars, four-twenty; the Legion of Valor, two; the Serbian Volunteer organization of the United States, six (poor Allex, he must be a joiner); accident Insurance costs thirty-four. And over in Serbia are his wife, two children, his parents, and the crops have been bad. He cannot get them over here—against that is the quota law, the fact that his wife is not very well and might not pass the immigration authorities, and the more central fact that he hasn't the money.

So it is that, in the midst of song, he will stop and sigh; and, sentimental Slav, say: "Thus the flower of my life is going, wifeless and childless." He hits his broad forehead with the palm of his hand and says, "It's my fault. When a youth I should have gone to night school. I was a fool, a fool. You see, I have no education."

He has medals—he showed them all to me, heaped in the red bandanna in which he keeps them wrapped. The Victory Medal with four battle clasps, the Croix de Guerre and Medaille Militaire, the British Distinguished Conduct Medal, the Milosh Obilich Gold Medal and the Karageorgevitch Star of Serbia, the Italian Merito di Guerra, the Montenegrin War Cross. And the Army Congressional Medal of Honor of the United States.

Sergeant Philip C. Katz

SERGEANT KATZ

The Citation

Philip C. Katz (2263512), Sergeant Company C, 363rd Infantry, 91st Division. Near Eclisfontaine, France, September 26, 1918. After his company had withdrawn for a distance of two hundred yards on a line with the units on its flanks, Sergeant Katz learned that one of his comrades had been left wounded in an exposed position at the point from which the withdrawal had taken place. Voluntarily crossing an area swept by heavy machine gun fire, he advanced to where the wounded soldier lay and carried him to a place of safety.

THIS is a story of saving, not of killing. Also it is the story of two Phils—of Phil Katz, who saved, and of Phil Page, who was saved. Moreover, it is the story of two San Francisco boys, both Phils being native sons of the engaging city by the Golden Gate.

The grandfather of Phil Katz came around the Horn in the gold-rush days; his father and mother were both born in San Francisco. The father of Phil Page was a French Canadian; really his name

was Pagé and not Page. He was a sailor; Phil was born "south of the slot," and remembers the great fire sweeping up his alley in 1906 when he was still a boy.

This is also, a little, the story of the Ninety-first Division, the famed Wild West Division, with rallying cry, "Powder River, let 'er buck!" which, thrown for its first fighting into the crucible of the Meuse-Argonne, astounded friend and foe. And the two Phils were both gas non-coms—the two gas N.C.O.'s of C Company of the 363rd Infantry, San Francisco's own.

Phil Katz, born in San Francisco, schooled in the Hancock Grammar, and then the Polytechnic High. But he never finished Polytechnic High. He left before graduating and "went to sea like a damned fool." The quotes are his. That is the way he speaks—at least when you question him about himself.

He is now Public Administrator of the City of San Francisco, a post of prominence and emoluments, obtained electorally (San Francisco seems to be one of the cities which does not forget). He is a slender man, with fine features and large gray eyes—a sensitive man with fine, tense nerves easily twanged. But that is the way he talks—as in the

quotes above: bluffly, almost gruffly. When I went to him I was, to tell the truth, after a sentimental story. I wanted a change; I tried hard to pull something soft out of him. But he defied me at every turn. He sat there, watching me come, and every time, met my wily approach square, and every time threw me for a loss.

"Were you and Page buddies before this happened?"

"Before what happened?"

"Your saving his life."

"No. Hell, no, we weren't buddies."

"Hadn't you been together a good deal?"

"No. Of course, I had seen him around. We were in the same company."

"But hadn't you been brought together close?"

"No. Naw. We were both gas non-coms, if that's what you mean."

"Well, then, what made you do it?"

"Aw, I don't know."

"What made you do it?"

"Aw, I don't know. He lay wounded out there."

"What made you do it?"

"I told you. I told you he lay wounded out there."

"What made you do it?"

"Oh, hell—just insanity, I guess."

Well, young Phil Katz, seventeen years old, left the Polytechnic High and went to sea "like a damned fool," and wind-jammed before the mast for six months. "Did you stick to the sea then?" I asked. "Not much!" he answered heavily. "Life is too short for that sort of stuff." When in 1917 we went to war, he was an employee of the East Bay Water Company and had not exceedingly prospered. He wanted to enlist but couldn't, because of certain financial obligations. There were people interested in keeping him alive! So he held himself in touch with the chairman of his draftboard and tried to arrange his affairs before enlisting, though determined to enlist (affairs arranged or not) before being drafted. It is too bad the whole world cannot hear what he now has to say of that ex-chairman of the draft board: a fine vitriolic stream of little biting words. For the worthy gentleman of the draft board had not that control of the future of which he so innocently boasted, and of a fine morning Phil Katz, having been assured a few days before that his number would not come before next spring, found himself drafted. He is still vehement about this. He got drafted and won the Congressional Medal of Honor, but it's being

drafted he remembers. "That certainly cut me up," he says. "It still cuts me up."

Up to Camp Lewis he went for hard drilling, there where the Wild West Division was being built up with drafts from California, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Alaska. He was then thirty years old, five feet nine, weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds. "Married?" I asked him.

"Not much! And not now! Not yet," he answered, his "not yet" a flaunting defiance.

Meanwhile the other Phil, Phil Page, had not left high school to go to sea, because he had never gone to high school nor to any other school. His father, the French Canadian, was a sailor, and when Phil was five years old there came a big sailors' strike, and little Phil got himself a job as errand boy, to help the sailors strike. But working (that is what is so dangerous about it) is likely to become a habit. Especially if it is discovered that you *can* work. Phil Page, five years old, got the habit; he has been working ever since. After the earthquake his family went back to Canada, and there he labored in the paper mills, long, grinding night work in terrible heat. Now he drives one of the delivery wagons of the Phœnix Linen Com-

pany, a concern which furnishes linen to offices, stores, barber shops. He delivers the linen clean, he takes it away soiled, in large, heavy, bulky bundles. And as he has a great long scar across the abdomen, sometimes he slips away quietly to the garage, and lies on the floor, and tries to rub back to flexibility adhesions that ache and stiffen.

He is a short, thick-set, resilient little follow, with great clear brown eyes, and an Indian profile, and a character full of a simple wistfulness toward doing the right thing. When he recalls the training days at Camp Lewis his eyes light up. "We worked hard all right," he says, "but they were pretty good days. You see I had worked all my life; I was used to working. I used to feel sorry for some of those college fellows who were used to getting up at ten o'clock and drifting to their classes in their automobiles. It must have been hard for them.

"We used to have games. I ran in the Marathon. Five miles. There was a great college runner entered too. I didn't know much about it, and I went in with my stomach full of dumplings and with my trench shoes on my feet. At that he only beat me by an eyelash.

"Yes—it wasn't bad; we'd have our fun."

I went to see Major Edward J. Mitchell (Dis-

tinguished Service Cross) who had been the two Phils' captain in Company C of the 363rd. For Fate has kept those three men close. The offices of Phil Katz, Public Administrator, are in the Phelan Building in Market Street; just across the way in the Humboldt Building are the law offices of Major Mitchell; and two blocks south, in an alley called Minna, is the Phœnix Linen Company, for which Phil Page drives a wagon. I asked Major Mitchell about Phil Page, and his eyes lit up. "He was a fine little soldier," he said, "as fine as you make them. A wiry little cuss, the divisions's best athlete and a fine soldier."

So I went back to Phil Page. "Your old captain says you were a fine soldier, Phil," I said.

He smiled a bit, quietly. "Well," he said, carefully appraising himself, "I was conscientious. I tried to do always as they told me. If I was told my uniform didn't fit, I went and had it fitted; if they told me I must keep my gun clean, I kept it clean—and that isn't maybe.

"Captain Mitchell tried me out once at inspection. We had been told that we must never answer anything at inspection, no matter what was said to us. So Captain Mitchell stood in front of me at inspection. He looked me over and said, 'That's a fine

uniform you have on. Well pressed, too. Do you press it yourself?'

"But I was on, and didn't say nothing.

"Then Captain Mitchell said, 'That's a fine polish you have on your shoes. Where do you get a polish like that?'

"But I just kept quiet and didn't say nothing, and he went on down the line. After a while, at rest, he came back and he said, 'You certainly remember what you are told.' Say, he was a fine man —a peach of an officer. Yes," he concluded, "I was conscientious, that's what I was."

Of Phil Katz, Medal of Honor, Captain Mitchell had other words. "No, he wasn't nearly as good a soldier as Page. He wasn't made for military life and he didn't care for it. But his spirit made him invaluable to the company, his *esprit de corps,* and that bluff way he has of speaking—on a hard hike or under other hardship, if the men began to grumble you'd hear Phil Katz get at them: 'Aw, shut up! What do you think this is—a Sunday school picnic? This is war! Shut up!' The grumblers would shut up."

I asked Phil Katz slyly if he liked military life. "Hell, no," he answered. "It's all right when you're needed. But for a steady diet, no! We had a cap-

tain, Mitchell—that boy was a hundred per center. I remember once he made us put up our tents three times and take them down again—and the fourth time they were *straight*. The squarest of guys, though, Mitchell. I'd rather be buck private with him than be a general."

Up at Camp Lewis, Phil Katz and Phil Page were sent to gas school and became Company C's two gas non-coms. Their duty was to see that the men all had masks in working order and knew how to use them. They had rank of corporal without being in command of squads. On June 19, 1918, with the situation at its darkest in France, the division began to entrain for its ride 'cross continent; on July 6, the two Phils were on a transport nosing out into the Atlantic. I asked Phil Katz if the transport was crowded. "Crowded? A little dirt sprinkled on us, and we'd all been worms." On July 17 the two Phils were on the Liverpool docks; on July 23 they were in France. All of August was spent in intensive training at the new open warfare, and on September 7 the Wild West Divisioners, now in wonderful condition, were placed in reserve for the coming St. Mihiel offensive. In reserve they remained during that battle—the only war experience they were to get be-

fore being thrown in at the very heart of the great Argonne offensive.

"Hadn't you had any fighting before the Argonne?" I asked Phil Katz.

"No, we'd never been in a scrap. We *had* been a little while in what they called 'a defensive sector.' But what the hell—we'd see an airplane now and then, that was all."

So it was that the Wild West Division, with insignia a pine tree, with rallying cry, "Powder River, let 'er buck!" having never fought before, was hurled for its red baptism in the battle since called the battle of the Argonne—a gigantic, immensely obstinate, bitter and desperate struggle which was to last forty-six days.

Forty-six days—not for the two Phils. Phil Katz fought ten days, then was sent back to the hospital for the rest of the war, and longer. Phil Page fought one day, and was sent back to the hospital for the rest of the war, and longer. Phil Katz fought ten days, and in that time got for himself a Congressional Medal and a dysentery; Phil Page fought one day, and in that one day managed to get his belly ripped open.

On September 26, at five-thirty in the morning, from behind a little rise that the French called

Cigalrie Butte, and the Western boys called Cigarette Butt, the two Phils went over as part of C Company, which was part of the 363rd Infantry, which was part of the Ninety-first Division, which was part of a battle line of nine divisions—two small mites in a very big hell. Phil Katz—like Phil Page, somewhat of a free lance, both being gas non-coms—had elected to go over with Lieutenant Cobb's platoon. He says he shoved Cobb up, and then Cobb, turning, pulled him up by the collar—and they were the first out. Katz's preparation had consisted mostly in throwing away a few tubes of salve which had been distributed to the gas officers against mustard-gas burns. "Little bits of tubes," Katz told me. "Say, there wasn't enough for use as tooth-paste!"

The morning was foggy. They couldn't see in front, they couldn't see to the side. A rolling barrage was crashing ahead, and their ears were still deaf with the continuous thunder of the artillery preparation. They passed through wire lanes, topped the Butte, and below them lay the valley of the Buanthe. A stray breeze for a moment tore the haze, and Phil Katz saw the stream's cradle, an inferno of bursting shells. "Do we have to go down there?" he asked of Cobb, and the lieutenant said

yes, that was the direction. "Good morning, Jesus!" said Katz. And then, "Here's where all your book problems go to hell!" "What do you mean?" asked Cobb. "From now on it's every dog for himself—that's what I mean."

Phil Page, meanwhile, had gone over with the platoon of Lieutenant Hill. And as he can't remember what he said, history will have to get along without it.

"What did you do next?" I asked of Phil Katz.

"Oh, nothing. I was just going along. Just going along with the gang, whooping and yelling like them!"

Neither can remember much of that long day's work, during which, under shells and tornadoes of gun fire, the Wild West Division, in its first fight, swept over six kilometers of hog-backs and ravines, thick-brushed, bristling with barbed wire, dotted with viper nests of machine guns cunningly placed; and, doing so, went a bit farther than any division of the long battle line, and especially farther than the three divisions on its left and the two on its right. Up to noon the advance was in a fog thickened with a smoke barrage. Friends could not see the foe till his eyeballs gleamed; friends could not see the friends to right or left.

It was almost impossible to keep alignment, it was almost impossible to keep in touch. Single men, squads, platoons got lost; but there was one thing these Western boys, raw in military science, kept in mind. "Hell—we didn't know anything," says Katz, "except to keep going ahead." Spectrally, through the fog, men, single, in small groups, not knowing just where they were but knowing where "ahead" lay, kept on going ahead; and when at noon the mist lifted, and they came under the full hail of the planted machine guns, still kept on going ahead.

Phil Katz remembers being with a group bombing dugouts. "Did you bomb any?" I asked.

He nodded. "Five or six. Just threw the grenades down the steps, but didn't wait to see what had happened. Just threw the bombs in and went on. Hell—we didn't know anything, except to keep going ahead."

And little Phil Page, lost with a few men of his company, a little off sector but still going forward, has two memories.

"There's one thing I remember that bothers me. I was crawling forward at a bad place, and a German started up behind me to run for a shell hole, and I turned quick and got him. And now I

often think he was just trying to get under cover, just trying to get away and not meaning any harm, and that bothers me."

The other thing he remembers well is falling into a brook the name of which he did not know and probably never will, and getting so sopped he took off his blouse, marching on in his shirt sleeves.

Late in the afternoon the situation was this. The Wild West Division had advanced much farther than the three divisions to its left and the two divisions to its right. What happens to a division in such a position is simple. It is being shot at, not only from the front, but from the right and the left. And of the division, Company C of the 363rd, of the two Phils, had got up farthest—under the leadership of their captain, Mitchell, who was to get the D.S.C. for his day's work under the following citation:

"Edward J. Mitchell, captain, 363rd Infantry, 91st Division. Leading a platoon in advance of other troops, he encountered and captured three German 155's which were in operation, also taking six officers and about 425 men. During the night he organized troops from his own and other divisions and established a formidable piece of front line."

A group of men of C Company had forced forward beyond their comrades. They had taken

the flattened village of Very, then had gone on, and now, a forlorn little band, as night approached were holding a bullet-swept plateau, facing a wooded ravine full of hidden machine guns. In that small detachment, now held up by a fury of open fire, were the two Phils, come there by different routes and unaware of each other's presence.

Such a position, up in the air, is not one to be held for the night. An order reached the little group, and slowly they withdrew a full two hundred yards, to where the bulk of the company, under Captain Mitchell, was digging in for the night. Among those who had thus retired was Phil Katz.

Where he was now, was comparative safety. Shell holes, funk holes, lees of hills. Here was the "outfit"; what was left of the company; comrades in reassuring even if depleted numbers; officers, organization—home, in other words. For to the soldier in battle it is poignantly that the outfit is Home. Sense of security was here after the uncertainty and the loneliness up there. And after a while there might be even a little food for the terribly empty stomach, and after a while maybe a few hours of snatched rest for the utterly ex-

hausted body, of forgetfulness for the enflamed brain, overfed with horror.

Phil Katz was just beginning to relax, when some of the men told him that Phil Page had been in the band up on the plateau; that he had not come back; that he had been left up there wounded.

Katz went to Lieutenant Cobb and said he wanted to go back to get Phil Page. Cobb refused permission. The way to the spot—for a long two hundred yards—was swept by machine gun fire; it was suicide to go; it meant losing a man in an attempt to get one already lost.

But Katz begged and Cobb finally said, "All right. If you want to take the chance, go on."

Katz, leaving his rifle behind, started up toward the bullet-swept little plateau two hundred yards away, where, he had been told, Phil Page lay wounded.

To go forward with a lot of men is one thing; to go forward with a lot of men yelling and whooping is one thing. But on the battlefield to do anything alone is hard. Even to lie in a shell hole, passively, alone, is an ordeal for the nerves of man as God made them. But to go forward all alone—that takes a soul indeed well forged.

Also, if you have been in a bad place, under

heavy fire, and have escaped from it after expecting to leave your bones there, you remember it with, you feel for it, an almost overwhelming and ghastly distaste. Even if the place has become quiet since, you can hardly drive yourself back to it: back in it, even if now it is quiet, you will sweat.

Phil Katz was now going forward all alone toward such a place; and it had not become quiet, but was the same hell exactly from which he had escaped.

He was without his gun, he was carrying a slicker. Progress, across this zone swept with machine gun fire, was a matter of crawling, with a sudden jump now and then—which sought to be faster than the flight of a bullet—from one shell hole to another, from one bit of meager cover to another. The distance to go was two hundred yards. The boys who thought they had seen Phil Page wounded thought he lay near a certain pile of rocks which Phil Katz thought he remembered. The sun was low; dusk was approaching.

Meanwhile what had happened to Phil Page? He had been in that small group beyond the general advance on the swept plateau above Very. Before them the ground dropped to a wooded ravine from which hidden machine guns sent bullets like

handfuls of rice. Open fire was coming from the right and the left.

Phil Page ("Well, you see, I was conscientious") was still trying to go forward, as throughout the day he had been going forward. He was trying to crawl toward the ravine.

Suddenly he saw one of the machine gun nests. Not in the ravine but to the right, in an enfilading position. "I could see the men as plain as day," he says. "Their helmets were sticking out—five of them."

Phil started crawling toward the machine gun nest. His father is a French Canadian; Phil's features are swart and aquiline; I should not wonder if there were in him some Indian blood. He made a good job of crawling, for the helmets remained in view, their owners evidently unaware of his approach.

When he had come nearer, he let them have a full clip from his rifle. The helmets vanished; the nest became perfectly quiet.

Phil raised his head, his body, a bit—and a first bullet hit him. He says it felt like being hit with a hammer. "I'd never experienced being hit with a hammer," he says, "but now that's my idea of being hit with a hammer."

Instinctively he got up to one knee to shoot and the second bullet hit him and spun him in an entire circle like a top.

He lay where he had fallen and remembered to be still; not to move, not to squirm. "They had told us," he says, "if we were wounded, to lie still, because moving would just draw more fire and just make us weaker."

So he lay still, out there in the open. But he felt something like hot soup (those are his words) pouring down his legs and into his shoes. He looked along his body, and saw that this hot liquid was his blood. "Then I saw my wound," he added. "It looked like my belly was ripped open from top to bottom."

He took his first-aid package, and still moving as little as possible, tried conscientiously to dress his wound as he had been told. But that package of dressing was like nothing in that great wound. Nevertheless he taped it on, then lay quiet again as he had been told to do.

He was getting weaker and he was cold. He had left his blouse back there somewhere after falling into a stream; he had no blanket and no slicker; what few clothes he had on were wet. The warm blood was leaving his body, and he was cold.

The day was waning. When I asked him ten years later at what time this was happening he answered: "It was late afternoon. The sun was setting. It was an Indian summer night—pretty as a picture."

Page is a Catholic. "I'd been a good churchman," he says, "but since going into the army I'd kind of forgotten about it. This bothered me now."

He remembered his mother, and thought he would leave her a note if he died. He had a little notebook; he tore out a page. He had a small stub of pencil. But when he began to write he felt right away that he would not be able to write much. So this is what he wrote:

"Mrs. P. P. Page, 3980 Sacramento Street, San Francisco."

Eight years later, from Oakland in California, a doughboy of his regiment, who had picked up the paper on the following day's advance, sent it to him, with its stains of dried mud and blood.

Page lay there, two hundred yards beyond the remnants of his entrenching company, the apex of the division's advance, perhaps the very lance point of the far-flung battle line, while his blood left him and the day drooped and night came on.

"Did you think you were going to die?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "I was getting weaker and weaker. Yes, I thought I was going to die. But it wasn't fear of death that was bothering me most. It was hearing crawlings around me. There seemed to be lots of crawling going on, all around. I was afraid one of those fellows might crawl up and tomahawk me from behind!"

Then a form rose before him in the dusk and came toward him. An American. Phil Katz.

I tried hard to find out just what was said at this meeting. When I asked Phil Katz, his answer was abstract. "Oh, he just didn't want me to come where he was," he answered. "Kept telling me not to."

But Phil Page told me the same thing more concretely. "I was calling him all the s.o.b.'s in the world," he said. "Telling him to stay down, to stay where he was. I thought sure they'd get him if he came near. I was calling him all the s.o.b.'s in the world."

But Phil Katz, in the face of the bullets and the s.o.b.'s, came on, and plumped down by the wounded boy's side.

The latter was still fiercely telling Katz to let him be, to stay down, to look out for himself. But

Katz went right on. He examined the wound. Nothing to do there. Nothing to do but get that boy back as soon as possible on a forlorn hope. Page was shivering with the cold; Katz took off his own blouse and put it on him. Then he wrapped him in his slicker, pushed both his arms beneath him, rose to one knee, with another effort stood upright, and started off, holding the wounded man as a mother holds her child.

A poor way, that, for carrying anything anywhere, but especially a man on the battlefield. For two reasons. First of all, it is mechanically the hardest way. Savages know that; they sling their young over the shoulder or across the hip. The army knows that; the men are taught to carry the wounded on their backs, when there are no stretchers. Secondly, this way of carrying brings the carrier up straight —inexorably upright. He cannot crawl, he cannot crouch nor even bend. And this going was under heavy fire.

But Phil Page's wound was in the abdomen. He would have suffered terribly if slung across Katz's back. So Katz held him in his arms like a babe, and stood upright amidst the whisper of bullets.

"He kept telling me to get down and leave him," now says Phil Katz.

"I kept calling him all the names in the world and telling him to get down and leave me," now says Phil Page.

But Phil Katz went on. Of course he couldn't go far at one time. He is of the slender, nervous type; he weighed only about a hundred and forty pounds, and Phil Page, though short, is stocky and weighed fully as much. Katz would go a little distance, then down; a little farther, then down.

What misery of exhaustion Phil Katz suffered in those two hundred yards of shell holes, barbed wire, brush, torn earth, diluted to sticky slippery ooze, is hard to imagine. I once carried a wounded man out, but I was not alone; I was helping a regular brancardier, and we had a stretcher; I was carrying only half the weight of a man, and that with the proper equipment. And it was under no such fire: only a few shells dropping now and then. But I had not gone far before I was welcoming those rare, those all too rare shells, because, when any dropped near, that big ruffian who was bearing the other end of the stretcher ahead of me (he looked seven feet tall and four feet wide, his wrists were columns and his stride was an ogre's) would have to get down and let me rest. But all too soon, implacably, he would be up again. And finally I was not only welcoming

the shells, I was calling for them; I was devoutly wishing one would drop square on top of my head, so weary was I.

So, talking to Phil Katz, it was almost sadistically I said, "Did you get tired?"

He nodded, that was all, still alert against my sentimentality. But for a moment he had looked far away. Far away back in time. And I had seen his eyes dilate at what he saw there. Oh, yes, he had felt weariness in that two hundred yard jaunt, under a storm of fire, carrying in his arms a limp torn form. A limp torn form which was still finding strength within itself to call him all the s.o.b.'s in the world.

Finally there came a time when he could no longer carry. Then he dragged. He would carry a few steps, then let his burden down upon the slicker, and then he would pull the slicker a few yards. Thus carrying and dragging, carrying and dragging, under the sweeping fire, slowly, little by little, he neared the newly established line. Till finally men came out of it and helped him, and the last few feet were over.

Propping Page up against a bank where the wounded were being collected, Katz went to his lieutenant and reported for duty. A German counter-attack was imminent.

Phil Page, left propped against the bank, "went out," as he calls it, and came to only in the morning. The line and Phil Katz had gone on in a second day's drive, but the fire here, even now, was such that the ambulance could not come for hours. At last one came bouncing up, and Phil Page started on his way, the dolorous way of the wounded. Hours in a leaping ambulance, then hours and hours on the dreary hospital train, and finally the hospital —where he remained sixty-three days.

When I interviewed Major Mitchell he emphasized the rigor of the investigation he had made before recommending Phil Katz for the Medal of Honor, and the fact that there was no doubt that the heroic deed had taken place under the heaviest of machine gun fire.

"But," he added, "that wasn't the most remarkable thing Phil Katz did in his ten days of fighting. Not to *my* mind."

"What was the most remarkable thing?" I asked.

"Well, on the fourth day we were fighting in muck—cold, hungry, exhausted. And Phil had found a German blanket, the only blanket he had. That night one of our lieutenants got sick. He wasn't a good officer, either, and the men didn't like him. But his feet were swelling, he had a high

fever, he was shivering. And Phil gave him the German blanket—the only blanket he had. Even if you haven't been to war but have only been camping, you'll understand what that meant."

So that is Phil Katz, Congressional Medal of Honor. The man who talks bluffly, and gruffly, when you mention such things, and who will let no sentiment creep in.

Private Thomas C. Neibaur

PRIVATE NEIBAUR

The Citation

Thomas C. Neibaur, Private Company M, 167th Infantry, 42nd Division. Near Landres-et-St. Georges, France, October 16, 1918. On the after-. . noon of October 16, 1918, when the Côte-de-Chatillon had just been gained after bitter fighting, and the summit of that strong bulwark in the Kriemhilde Stellung was being organized, Private Neibaur was sent out on patrol with his automatic rifle squad to enfilade enemy machine gun nests. As he gained the ridge he set up his automatic rifle and was directly thereafter wounded in both legs by fire from a hostile machine gun on his flank. The advance wave of the enemy troops, counter-attacking, had about gained the ridge, and although practically cut off and surrounded, the remainder of his detachment being killed or wounded, this gallant soldier kept his automatic rifle in operation to such effect that by his own efforts and by fire from the skirmish line of his company, at least one hundred yards in his rear, the attack was checked. The enemy wave being halted and lying prone, four of the enemy attacked Private Neibaur at close quarters. These he killed. He then moved alone among the enemy

lying on the ground about him, in the midst of the fire from his own lines, and by coolness and gallantry captured eleven prisoners at the point of his pistol and, although painfully wounded, brought them back to our lines. The counter-attack in full force was arrested to a large extent by the single effort of this soldier, whose heroic exploit took place against the sky line, in view of the entire battalion.

WHEN, after a rather long journey on a very unlimited train, I landed at the small town of Sugar City, in the Snake River country of the state of Idaho—which, everyone knows, is high up, and true Far West—I was met at the station by an elderly, blue-eyed man who told me he was the father of Thomas Neibaur, Congressional Medal of Honor. Sugar City is not a city; it is a small settlement which has grown around a sugar factory built to make use of the many beets grown in the shallow valley. There are no cabs; Neibaur senior and I walked toward the house of the Medal of Honor man—over the strewn, golden cottonwood leaves of this beautiful October morning—and as we walked we talked. He told me that he worked in the sugar factory at night, and thus it was he was able to meet my train in the morning. Presently he would go to bed to sleep for the day.

He then explained why his son Thomas had not come to meet me. "Tommy," he said, shaking his head, "has certainly had no luck since the war. Most of his bad luck happens in October. It was in October he was shot in the war, ten years ago. Two years ago his wife's father was killed in the sugar factory. Last year, in October, one of his babies was drowned. And two weeks ago Tommy got badly hurt in the factory."

He went on to tell me of the accident. It seems that Thomas Neibaur, Medal of Honor, is an oiler in the sugar factory. He was oiling a big machine when the sleeve of his right arm was seized by a cog. Slowly the cog drew the arm in. When the machine had been stopped by another man who luckily had seen, it had to be dismantled to free the arm, which by this time had been badly mangled.

"But the doctor found the bone hadn't been hurt," Neibaur senior went on. "Tommy was in the hospital two weeks, but he is home again. That day he went home from the hospital was just exactly ten years from the day in France when he walked back from the front to the hospital."

So when I advanced up the board walk to the front door of the Neibaur cottage, it was in fear of finding gloom and consternation behind that door.

It opened, and I saw four little children. They had been romping on the carpet; now they stood in line to be introduced, smiling with that utter trust which is the Western child's. There were Faye, seven years old; Marian, six; Keith, three; and the baby Lamar, just one year old. The mother appeared, young, pink-cheeked, an overworked mother and housewife who refused to look overworked. The house was gay with cleanliness; the sun poured in through the wide windows; white starched curtains completed the effect of lightness and clearness.

In the center of the room Thomas Neibaur sat, his wounded, white-wrapped arm laid before him across the table. My first surprise was at his youth. But then, he was not quite nineteen when he went into the war, and only a kid when he won the medal. What struck me next were his eyes, clear gray-blue eyes in deep orbits—the eyes of a sharpshooter. I found myself saying, "You must be a good shot."

He laughed. "Just a little better than the average around here," he said. Which must be fairly good, the "around here" being Idaho, on top of the world, where you shoot deer and bear. And, at that, a part of Idaho not so far from famous Jackson

Hole, where what is shot hasn't always four legs.

Above the eyes I saw a fine, high forehead beneath back-flowing hair. "Yes," I thought, "and there's something of the artist about you." But didn't say it. You don't say that to any man in the West.

I sat down at the table and we talked. All that morning, as we talked, the four little children romped about, as little children should. The man's mangled arm within the bandages was aflame. Yet in all that time not a sign of annoyance left him; the only motion he made was whenever one of the tots passed close—a gentle stroking of a small head as it flew by.

He is a Westerner entirely. He was born in Idaho, in the Bear Lake Valley near Mt. Peter, on a farm. His father came to Idaho when two years old, from Salt Lake, where *his* father had come with the first hand-cart company, in 1852, in the days of the gold rush. Young Thomas Neibaur spent his boyhood on a farm, going to the public school of Teton, near Jackson Hole; and he was on a farm when the war came, before he was yet nineteen.

Also, he is a Mormon. I asked him, and he answered very simply, "Yes, I belong to the Mor-

mon church. All my people do." Up to that time my ideas of Mormons were rather hazy, except that I was very certain they were a queer sect. Now that I know Thomas Neibaur I think it would be good if the entire United States turned Mormon —his kind of Mormon.

Tommy Neibaur was working on his brother-in-law's farm when, in March, 1917, came President Wilson's call for twenty-five thousand volunteers. Tommy immediately became one of the first twenty-five thousand, enlisting in the Idaho National Guard a little over a week before the declaration of war. The Idaho National Guard was put to guarding railroads. From April to October Tommy guarded railroads. I asked him what he thought of military life.

He laughed and admitted that at first it did not seem so good. "I thought it was the bunk," he said. "It was hard to get accustomed to the way they did things. There seemed to be an awful lot of foolishness about it."

The guarding of railroads stopped in October, and the Second Idaho Infantry became part of the Forty-first Division, training at Camp Mills and then at Camp Merritt. He was gunner in the 146th Machine Gun Battalion, and with that outfit went

to France on the *Olympic,* in January, 1918. It was the first time he had seen the ocean.

"What did you think of it?" I said.

"I thought it was big," he chuckled. "I had thought Salt Lake big before that. But this was surely bigger."

While in training over there, he was transferred —an infantryman once more—to the 167th Regiment of the Forty-second, or Rainbow, Division. The four infantry regiments of this division were from distinct parts of the land: the 166th from Ohio, the 168th from Iowa, the 167th from Alabama, while the 165th was the old Fifty-ninth Irish of New York. Neibaur was with the Alabama boys, who were to acquire a name for ferocity in battle and turbulence when at rest.

"A pretty tough bunch?" I suggested.

His eyes lit up. "Well," he said, "they were a bit rough and a bit rowdy. But there were no boys who'd stand by closer. I'll tell you how it was. They were so full of life and pep they had to be doing something all of the time. If there was nothing doing, then they'd have to do *something*. They'd raise hell."

And when I asked him about some of the towns where he had been, he was again amused. "You

see," he said, "we weren't in many towns. Towns weren't crazy to have the Alabamas. And Headquarters seemed to think it was better for the towns if we weren't in them, and better for us if we weren't in the towns. Two-thirds of us never knew where we were, anyhow, and didn't care. Yes, we were a bit rough—"

"And what kind of soldier were you?" I asked.

"A pretty tame one," he said quickly.

The division went to Lorraine, in "quiet sector," where, Neibaur says, "we hated ourselves." In the cold mud, under shell and gas, in endurance without much activity, they were learning, slowly being pickled into real soldiers. Then they were assigned to General Gouraud's army and thrown into the great defensive battle of Champagne. In March the Germans had attacked, had nearly destroyed the British army, had almost taken Amiens. In May they had attacked and driven in the Château Thierry salient to within fifty miles of Paris. Now they were preparing a third assault, which was to be the last one, and the end of the war. But Gouraud had ascertained the time and place of this planned final drive. He had brought up much artillery; he had left his front lines with a light screen of observing troops and had withdrawn his main

body several kilometers, so that the enemy must stagger across a wide terrain under storm of fire before striking home.

It was a great battle to be in, for one's first. At midnight of July 14 the world suddenly became a stunned chaos of dreadful uproar. Both artilleries had started at once. All night the incredible din kept up, while shells dropped on the dugouts, bursting them open, or deluging the men in gas. All night, under this, the men patiently waited. At dawn little groups of the sacrificial thin front line began to trickle back. The enemy was approaching. The men left their holes and manned the defenses. For a long time they fired and fired across the level land without seeing anything. Then out of the haze and the smoke the German masses appeared.

Tommy Neibaur was an automatic rifleman; there were two in each platoon. He had a Chauchat automatic which sprayed twenty bullets one upon the other before having to be reloaded, swiftly, with another clip. Two boys at his side did the loading; he had only to shoot. He shot. Shot and shot and shot. All through that morning, through that afternoon, as attack after attack came to die at his feet like hissing foam of waves.

He says: "On the Chauchat automatic there's a

sort of bell-shaped thingamajig which is supposed to keep it cool. It didn't keep mine cool. The gun was red-hot in my hands."

After that, Neibaur was in the hard battle of the Ourcq, where he saw the brother regiment, the Irish 165th, almost wiped out. He saw the Irish fighting with the bayonet. "I never had to do that," he says, "thank God." Then he was at St. Mihiel, but the Alabamas were only in reserve.

So he came to the middle of October, 1918, and there was only a month of the war left—though no one knew that. And he was still a private, without the least decoration. Only a month of fighting left, and no decoration. Hurry up, Tommy Neibaur!

On October 11 the division was thrown full into the great battle of the Argonne, which had been raging since September 26. The sector given them was one in which the Thirty-fifth Division first had fought. It had gone on till exhausted and decimated. Then the veteran First had taken up. It too had gone on till spent, half of its infantry gone. And now the Forty-second was dumped before the formidable Kriemhilde Stellung.

This was a cunningly arranged and intricately wired position consisting of three lines of entangle-

ments and trenches. The first tangle of wire was breast-high and as much as twenty feet deep, in small squares held strongly by iron supports, so that artillery fire had practically no effect upon it, unless the very ground in which it was planted was blasted off the planet. Back of this first entanglement were trenches four feet deep, with machine gun nests set so that their fire crisscrossed, poured along every natural line of advance, and filled with buzzing steel the zigzag lanes left in sinister invitation within the wire. Behind this front line was a second line, and behind that a third. The division had this in front; behind was an ocean of ooze which made it impossible to bring up enough ammunition for the guns—or, for that matter, food for the men.

Two kilometers stretched between the Alabamas and the first wire, and beyond the position was a wooded knoll called the Côte de Chatillon. The Alabamas' job was to take the Côte de Chatillon, which commanded the terrain in front and to right and left, and which enfiladed the Irish, who were to the left.

At five-thirty of the morning of October 14 the men left their water-soaked holes, and in mist and rain started across a lake of mud toward the barbed wire. All that day, and all the next, they broke

themselves upon it, under a hail of machine gun fire and terrific bursts of shell fire. The line would advance till the bullets were one great wind. Many fell, others dropped into whatever shelter they could find. The order would be given to advance again. Three or four men would leap out, come into the line of fire, drop. Another group would leap forward, to go down like the first. There would be another halt, while the enemy artillery searched the ground and with direct hits blew the men out of their holes. Then the order to try it again.

Thus for two days. On the morning of the sixteenth what was left of the shattered regiment was gathered together and regrouped. What once had been two or three squads was made into one squad; what once had been two or three platoons was made into one platoon; rags and tags of nearly destroyed companies were put together. M Company, Neibaur's, was huddled in a small wood of willows and was under heavy shell fire. "Was there gas?" I asked. "Plenty of gas," he said heartily. A dreary rain fell. The men were cold, famished, exhausted. They had only one blanket apiece; for two days they had lived on their iron rations. "We didn't care *who* won the war," now says Thomas Neibaur, M.H.

Then the officers went among their men and told them that failure to take the Côte de Chatillon meant the loss of the great Argonne battle. The knoll was the key to the whole far-flung struggle, they said. It must be taken to win the battle and to win the war.

The Alabama boys went at it once more. By noon they had broken through the wire, and a little later had swept on clear to the top of the Côte de Chatillon.

As night approached a line was organized; the doughboys started to dig in against counter-attacks sure to come.

Thomas Neibaur was in M Company and was the gunner of an automatic rifle crew. His gun, a Chauchat, weighed twelve pounds, fired twenty rounds at a clip, and had fastened to it a rod which dropped perpendicularly when the gun was aimed, making a support very much like that seen in pictures of old blunderbusses.

The men of M Company, spread out, were making the earth fly under their feet with shovels, and out in front with bullets. They were on a plateau and before them was a low ridge. They were, as it were, in the orchestra pit; the ridge was the stage.

And now, just as their long, bitter, three days'

desperate effort seemed about to be rewarded with success, and perhaps with a bit of relative rest, and perhaps with a bit of food for their hollow bellies, disaster stalked upon them. Men began to drop, singly or in groups. If anyone rose he was downed. If a head showed above a funk hole, a bullet burst it open. The work of organizing the position became impossible; and over that ridge ahead, soon, inevitably, a counter-attack would be pouring. The entire company, or its pitiful remnant, was pasted to the ground. A machine gun from somewhere had it enfiladed. Its deadly spout, from the side, was piercing its length as a needle threads beads.

To the left of the company was a wooded hollow; to the right was a wooded hollow: the wings, you might say, of the stage made by the ridge ahead. It was in the hollow to the right that the machine gun was hidden; the holes in the dead, in the wounded, established that.

Neibaur was lying in the hole he had dug, his automatic rifle pointed at the crest of the ridge over which presently the counter-attack would come, when Lieutenant Bank came crawling along, leaping from shelter to shelter, and shouting for an automatic rifle team—a gunner, a loader, a scout—

volunteers who would try to get that murderous machine gun. Neibaur said he would go, and two others said they would go with him.

"What made you do it?" I asked him ten years later.

He threw back his head and laughed. "I don't know," he said. "A sudden rush of patriotism to the head, I guess."

The loader who had volunteered to go along was a big Italian called Boscarino. I am not sure of the spelling, because Neibaur is not. "I don't know how to spell it," he said, "I used to just sneeze it."

And the name of the second volunteer he doesn't know at all. "I can't remember his name," he said. "But I can *see* him, all right. Plain. He was a little bit of a guy, light-haired—the other extreme of Boscarino, who was black and big."

Neibaur, and the big Italian, and the little bit of a guy, set out to get the machine gun. Neibaur carried the Chauchat, and the other two carried ammunition.

The ridge before the deployed company was like a stage. The murdering gun was in a hollow which was like the right wings of that huge stage. But to the left was another wooded hollow, like

the left wings of the stage, and it was toward this that Neibaur and his two companions started, and into it that, slowly creeping, they vanished.

After a while they reappeared. It was as if, having exited into the wings close to the footlights, they were reëntering the stage close to the back drop. After going deep into the hollow, they had turned at right angles, then after a while at right angles again. And now they were coming out upon the ridge, a hundred yards ahead of where they had started, a hundred yards in front of the deployed company.

Of the details of this movement Neibaur does not remember much. They crawled, they carefully kept to shelter. It was hard toil, what with the weight of the gun and the ammunition. It was heart-thumping toil, for at any moment they expected to run into a group of the enemy. Neibaur led. Few words were spoken, these having to do mainly with the direction and with the calculations necessary to keeping under cover.

Coming out on the ridge, they redoubled, if anything, their care. They were now fully one hundred yards ahead of the company, one hundred yards nearer the enemy's lines. They must keep from being seen from these lines; they must keep from be-

ing seen by the machine gun crew they were stalking; and—knowing how cunningly the Germans checkerboarded their deadly repeaters—from other machine guns, surely set to protect with cross-fire the one they were stalking.

So they kept a little below the crest, to be out of sight of the main enemy lines; they crept low, and went from hole to hole, from bush to bush, from stone to stone, hiding from the flanking machine gun they were after, and the others which were sure to be about. This as if on a stage, in full view of their comrades below. They would vanish for long moments, and then a leap, some sudden rush, would bring them into sight; by those flashes their slow and infinitely hazardous progress could be followed, across stage, toward the right wings, where presently they would vanish again for the climax of the dramatic act—success or death.

Finally Neibaur, Boscarino and the small blond boy had reached that part of the ridge which was the center of the stage. They came now upon new difficulty. A tangle of barbed wire was before them, a place where some sort of a redoubt had been begun by the enemy and abandoned.

They huddled low in a depression of the ground and considered. The obstacle was squarely in their

path. It spread across to the right and the left as far as their limited vision reached. It was hopeless to go around it, or it would take too long (the machine gun they were after was still at the moment mercilessly prodding their comrades below). On the other hand, one cannot crawl over or through barbed wire. The only course was to stamp across—and do this so swiftly that perhaps the leap would not be seen.

At Neibaur's word, the three sprang—Neibaur with his heavy gun, the other two with the heavy cases of ammunition. Raising knees high, they started to cross the wire.

They had almost crossed—when pr-r-r-r-r-r, a machine gun sounded from somewhere. The three men spun in the air, and slapped the earth.

Neibaur found himself still conscious, though he knew he had been hit. Lying on the ground, he looked about for his comrades. The blond slight boy lay near by, dead. Boscarino was lying a little farther on. Neibaur crawled to him. He was still alive, but, shot in many places, evidently done for. Neibaur gathered up the ammunition, and with it crawled a few yards ahead where there was a hole behind a bank of earth. Here he examined his wounds. Three bullets had zipped through his right thigh.

But these wounds were not bleeding very badly, he decided. Nor had the bone been shattered. He was still good. Good enough to go on with this job he had undertaken. He would push on alone.

He could see what he was after now. In the hollow flanking his comrades, he could see, among trees, a low parapet, helmets behind . . . the venomous nest of the gun which was destroying the company.

He set up his Chauchat, he gathered himself. Then he heard the Germans coming.

He laughed as he told me this ten years afterward. "I heard them, and I thought there were at least five thousand of them. I looked toward the noise, and they were coming over the top of the ridge. But there weren't five thousand—only about fifty. They were charging down on me, shouting and shooting, their bayonets fixed."

What was really happening—although he did not know it until later—was that the counter-attack had come, and that he was facing one of its waves. All alone, one hundred yards in front of his company, he was facing the lance point of the German counter-attack.

He let go with the automatic at the fifty or more charging toward him. Bullets were spattering earth all about him, throwing pebbles into his very

teeth. He shot fast—a whole clip, twenty shots. Then another clip, twenty more shots. "Were you hitting many?" I asked.

"Yes, I was. Oh, I know I was! I could see them drop. But the others were still coming."

He slipped a third clip of twenty cartridges into the automatic. It let out ten of these in one purr—then stopped. He beat at it with his hands, he jerked at the mechanism. To no avail. The gun had jammed.

"Then I gave up," he told me. "I dropped the damned old gun right there, and started down the hill toward my own guys below me."

It must not be thought that he simply ran erect down the hill toward the line of his company. The fire which had been sweeping the battleground had risen to a new climax. The Germans were letting go with everything they had, the Americans were letting go with everything they had. It was a-crawl under this sweeping carpet of fire, leaping from hole to hole, that Neibaur descended toward his fellows.

He was half way down when a fourth bullet struck him—in the right hip, in the leg already thrice wounded. This was a deeper wound than the others (Neibaur carries the bullet still, in the

joint). It affected the spine; Neibaur lapsed into unconsciousness. He lay there on the slope between the two armies, he does not know how long, though it must have been a short time, for when he came to, the action from which he had vanished so suddenly was going on like a film only briefly cut. He woke up—and found himself surrounded by Germans.

They were all around him, about fifteen of them. He watched them out of the slit of one eye, playing possum. They were starting to go away! One by one they were turning from him and going on about their red business. He saw something gleam on the ground about twenty feet from him. His automatic pistol. They had thought him dead; to make safety still surer they had taken his pistol and had thrown it well out of reach (how far can a dead man reach?) And now they were crawling on about further bloody affairs, leaving him for dead.

Behind their departing soles, he quickly scrambled to elbow and knee, crept to his pistol, and secured it.

All this time his company, deployed below, had been firing heavily, of course, from their fox-holes; and able to catch glimpses of his movements, had held their fire away from him. But while he had

been lying unconscious he had been out of sight; and where he was now, recovered pistol in hand, he was out of sight. Up he rose to signal his whereabouts, in definite disinclination to being plugged by one of his own.

At this, eight Germans leaped out of a hole and came charging toward him with fixed bayonets, ferociously determined to end it with this dead man who so disloyally refused to stay dead. "How did they look?" I asked Neibaur. "I remember only one," he answered. "A great big fellow with a thick red beard like a ball of fire."

Why did they not fire? They didn't, and to this day Neibaur wonders why. They were out of ammunition, perhaps, he thinks. Maybe they did not think it necessary to shoot; not knowing that he had regained his pistol.

But he had. He pulled down on them, one, two, three, four times. That boy who now says he shoots just a bit better than the average "around here"—which means Sugar City, Idaho—must have been already in those days a little better than the average. Four of the charging men dropped dead in their tracks.

He held his fifth shot. Better face four men with a single cartridge in one's gun than three men with

nothing in one's gun. Young Neibaur's lightning calculation proved the correct one. Before that gun, with its one sure death still within it, the assailants wavered, slowed—and suddenly they were raising their hands in the air, tossing their helmets to earth, in surrender to this young Jove of the thunderbolt.

Waving the gun, shouting, Tommy started the prisoners back toward his comrades. Out of shell holes on the way he picked up seven more. And came into the lines with the eleven almost intact, only slightly pinked during the final gallop.

On February 6, 1919, just out of the hospital and still wobbly on his legs, standing at attention in the snow at Chaumont, he saw the Congressional Medal of Honor pinned to his breast by General Pershing himself. France gave the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre with palm, Italy the Merito di Guerra, and Montenegro its War Cross.

§

After the war, Thomas Neibaur did something which he now declares to have been foolish. He plays the banjo. His neighbors tell me that he plays it well. After the war, instead of getting right down to hard work, as those who didn't fight agree a soldier should do, Tommy Neibaur with his two

brothers and two cousins, all of them musicians, formed an orchestra and toured about, strumming banjos—a foolish thing to do, now says Neibaur. Then he married Miss Lois Shepard, of Sugar City. After which, dropping the banjo, he took a vocational course in agriculture at the University of Utah. He came out of that with much knowledge in the theory of agriculture. Practice he already had had—all his life. And now to-day, having practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge, he is crazy to have a farm, and sure he could make a go of it. But he has not the necessary capital, so he works as oiler in the sugar factory to support his wife and four little children.

There is something queer about this Thomas Neibaur, anyway. He had laughed so much, and had been so humorous, when talking about the war, that when he had finished I said to myself, "There's a boy who wasn't over-sensitive, certainly, and who went through the war healthily."

But later we went to see his mother (she lives a few doors from him), and I was speaking with her of the difficulty of drawing out of the men who fought any record of their experiences, when she said: "Yes, that is the way with Tommy. He would never tell us anything.

"One day," she went on, "his father finally tried to get it out of him. He placed a chair here, and a chair opposite. He sat himself in one chair and Tommy in the other. 'Now you tell me all about it,' he said.

"So Tommy started. But he's such a baby! Oh, he's such a baby! After a while I looked, and there he sat on the edge of his chair as he talked, and the tears were just dripping from his eyes to the floor.

"Till his father said, 'Never mind, Tommy, if it makes you feel so bad. Tell me some other time.' "

Later in the day when I had the chance I asked Neibaur why this was. And to my surprise saw his eyes again quickly fill with tears.

"It's when I think of those thousands of boys that have gone west," he said.

Still later I went with him to the doctor's where he had his arm dressed. The wound was a terrible one. The cogs of the big machine had bitten deep; the forearm was a red raw mass. And the physician must clean this with a burning antiseptic. You could see the naked flesh quiver in revolt. But Thomas Neibaur sat there with a little tight smile on his lips, defying the pain, daring it do its worst.

Sergeant Ludovicus M. M. Van Iersel

SERGEANT VAN IERSEL

The Citation

Ludovicus M. M. Van Iersel, Sergeant Company M, 9th Infantry, 2nd Division. At Mouzon, France, November 9, 1918. While a member of the reconnaissance patrol, sent out at night to ascertain the condition of a damaged bridge, Sergeant Van Iersel volunteered to lead a party across the bridge in the face of heavy machine gun and rifle fire from a range of only seventy-five yards. Crawling alone along the débris of the ruined bridge he came upon a trap, which gave way and precipitated him into the water. In spite of the swift current he succeeded in swimming across the stream and found a lodging place among the timbers on the opposite bank. Disregarding the enemy fire, he made a careful investigation of the hostile position by which the bridge was defended, and then returned to the other bank of the river, reporting this valuable information to the battalion commander.

A STUDY of the citation will show that Ludovicus—he calls himself Louis now—just did manage to make that Medal of Honor before the final gong. On November 9 he did the deed; on

November 11 the war ended. He had been working toward this climax for some time, however. He already had the Croix de Guerre and, as a matter of fact, he had started his collection of medals before the war. On February 2, 1917, while an able seaman on the *Olaf Mearks,* a Danish freighter bound from Copenhagen to New York, he spotted at night four red lanterns. The freighter was turned toward this distress signal, and at dawn found the schooner *English Secret,* torpedoed and sinking in the heavy seas, with five men of the crew of sixteen still clinging on. Louis, with two comrades, volunteered to man a boat in the cold heavy seas. They saved the English sailors and the King of England gave Ludovicus a medal and five pounds in gold, and the Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York gave him a medal. All this before Ludovicus went to war.

He was then a little Dutchman who didn't speak any English. He was born in the town of Dussen, in Holland, where small boys wear wooden shoes, and keep both hands deep in the pockets of ballooning pantaloons in a setting of canals, dykes and windmills. His father died before he was two years old, and thenceforth his mother kept a little shop of general merchandise—which she still does, in

the same place, though now seventy-two years old. When Ludovicus was six he was taken next door to see a new baby. The baby was a girl; her name was Hendrika de Ronde, and Ludovicus liked her right away. When she had reached the mature age of three she entered the public school where he had been going already for several years (boys and girls study early in Holland), and he liked her still more. Nevertheless, at the age of eleven he ran away from home.

He ran away from home to become an apprentice baker. For five years he kneaded dough and was white with flour in Breda; then, the urge of adventure growing strong, shipped as mess boy on a barge that towed up and down the Rhine from Rotterdam to Mannheim. By the time he was nineteen this had become tame, and he took truly to the sea on a tramp steamer. He saw Africa and South America, was mess boy, then ordinary seaman, then able seaman, and in 1915, while on a Dutch boat, was torpedoed by a German sub. The sub-captain gave the Hollanders eight minutes to leave the boat. "We got out in eight minutes all right," now says Ludovicus. Then they had to row to shore—a very, very long row.

Thus he came to the day when from the *Olaf*

Mearks he helped save other victims of the sly undersea war. The *Olaf*, proceeding, entered New York harbor a few days later and docked at Hoboken. Upon which Ludovicus Van Iersel, rescuer and hero, promptly deserted.

He settled in Passaic, New Jersey, and drove a coal wagon, delivering coal to the good people of Passaic, New Jersey. But the great turmoil had spread to America; the United States were at war. Ludovicus decided to get into that war. He tried the navy. They didn't want him because he couldn't speak English. He tried the army. They didn't want him because he couldn't speak English. A Dutch sergeant in Newark helped him out. He slipped Ludovicus a list of answers to the questions usually asked to test knowledge of United States, and Ludovicus boned, and learned all those answers by heart, and finally got in—into the Ninth Infantry, which, later, with the Twenty-third Infantry, and the Fifth and Sixth Marines, made up the famous Second Division.

Just about eleven years later, I asked him why he had done it. We were in his cottage in Los Angeles, where he lives with his wife and his three little tow-headed boys, John, Sebastian and Louis. Born in the United States and speaking only

English, they are likely to stand with feet apart, hands deep in pockets, as good little Dutchmen on posters do.

Ludovicus looked at me thoughtfully with those blue eyes of his—big blue eyes, fringed with long curling lashes; gentle eyes, girlish eyes almost. He smiled. "Vell," he said, with a trace of his native accent, "I tink it was mostly a foolish idea to get some eggzitement."

He was to get it—the eggzitement. But not at first. He was a little Dutchman as Dutch as a round Edam cheese. Among those not-too-soft gentlemen adventurers of the Ninth Infantry he had a hard and dull time at first. They were a bit hazy in geography; they made no strict distinction between Dutch and Deutsch; he was suspect. "If anybody had a tough time, I sure had," he now says feelingly, though with no resentment. He wasn't trusted with a rifle; he was kept at kitchen police; he peeled potatoes three months straight. When in September, 1917, the Second Division went to France, he peeled potatoes all the way across the big Atlantic.

But he was not only peeling potatoes; he was studying the language of his adopted country. "Oh, but I studied hard!" he says now. "Boy, I studied

hard to get that dog-gone language in my head a little bit!"

He must have got some of that dog-gone language into his head, for in the training area in France a rifle was placed in his hands. In happiness he drilled. He was being accepted. Came Château Thierry. The Marines were carrying on and the Ninth Infantry was in reserve. It was a reserve that was a hell. "No assault," he describes it. "Just dodging shells. Plenty of 'em. We lost lots of men."

He must have dodged well, for in the next battle—the big battle of Soissons, turning-point of the war—his officers were using him as "point" of a patrol. The point is the apex, the advance man of the patrol. Louis has a simple explanation for having thus been chosen as point. "You see," he says, "I speak some German. I guess they figured if I came upon too many Germans I could pretend I *was* German. A German spy in American uniform."

Anyway, in the battle of Soissons he was point of a patrol, and "right in it" during the big days of July 18, 19, and 20. On the first day he found himself facing a machine gun nest. There were only a gunner and a loader left of the crew, but those two were doing well enough with their deadly

engine. Lying in a shell hole with his rifle, Louis shot it out with them. His hole was deep enough, but a bit shy in diameter; his feet stuck out. After an hour and a half of this game the machine gun stopped dead, and Louis, knowing that it was jammed or out of ammunition, left his hole and rushed forward. Then he discovered the hideous truth. His shoes had no heels! While he had been lying in the shell hole the machine gun bullets, razing the soil, had shot the heels off his trusty army brogans. "That made me mad," he says now. "I was awful mad. I hit that gunner fellow right on top of the head with the butt of my rifle!"

The second man surrendered to this display of force, and when the clubbed gunner weakly came to, he found himself without boots. Ludovicus had slipped them on his own feet, which were trudging on once more deeper into battle.

A little later, Louis, in his German boots, was zipped in the right arm by a bullet. He cut off the sleeve of his blouse, tied the wound up with the sleeve of his shirt, and went on. On the second day of battle a missile went through his right hand, near the index finger. He rested that night in a dugout; there was a rumor that they had just missed the Kronprinz. Up bright and early on the third

day, he received, in the evening, a piece of shrapnel in the left wrist. This was quite a wound; he wrapped it in a length of puttee. He didn't want to go to the rear. "I had just got warmed up," he says. But he did go to the rear—helping wounded to the dressing station, then going up forward for more. He did this all night, and in the morning (the battle's fourth day), fell from lack of blood and was carried away, to remain in the hospital seven weeks. Of his company there were only eight men left.

For that three days' work the French gave him the Croix de Guerre on the following citation, signed by Marshal Petain himself.

"The eighteenth of July, near Soissons, although thrice wounded, refused evacuation and gave succor to his wounded comrades."

Leaving the hospital, Louis hitch-hiked it to Nancy just in time to join his outfit as it was marching off for the battle of Saint Mihiel. This march was a hard one in the night and the rain. Each man's hand was on the front man's shoulder. "Boy, it was some hike," Louis still says, enthusiastically. "I was a bit wobbly yet; boy, it was some hike to me." The regiment was in support, and at dawn moved out upon the battlefield behind the

marines. The work was mostly mopping up. And there was one trench which Ludovicus "cleaned up pretty good." He had got well forward of the patrol of which he was the point, when he came to a big trench, which he entered. He slid along between walls for a distance, and the trench turned sharply to the right. He rounded that corner, and came to another turn. He slid his nose carefully around this turn—and saw something which for a moment petrified him. At the end of the segment along which he was peering, at a wide place where the trench elbowed once more at right angles, a group of German officers were peacefully studying their maps around a table.

Ludovicus took a run, and pounced upon the students before they could much more than raise their chins in wonder. "Hände hoch!" he shouted, his automatic on them, and up came their hands, as he stood there on legs, he says, that violently shook.

With what German he knew, he proceeded to address these officers in fatherly fashion. He did not tell them he was alone; he told them they were surrounded, that a hundred thousand men were up there, just out of sight, on the parapet. He explained that he was a German himself and hated to see Germans killed. He gave them advice; it would be

much better if they quietly surrendered themselves and their force. The officers—there were five of them—sagely considered a moment, then yielded to his eloquence. Keeping their hands up, Ludovicus herded them up to the parapet. The German captain blew his whistle, and from a dugout near by—a dugout Ludovicus had failed to notice—sixty men leaped out like rabbits.

"I was sure scared to death," now says Ludovicus. "Boy, I was scared! That dugout door hadn't been fifty feet from me all of that time. When they came out now, I thought it was all up with me."

But they were coming out without their guns. The whistle had been in good faith and an order to surrender. The rest of Louis' patrol of eight men was coming up. He presented them with sixty-five prisoners, five officers and sixty men.

For this he got a second Croix de Guerre, on a citation again signed by a marshal of France:

"Gave proof of initiative and intrepidity in the reduction of a redoubtable machine gun nest, thus contributing powerfully in the capture of the guns, with five officers and sixty men."

"Yes, that German captain believed me," is his conclusion. "I must have had a pretty honest face in those days."

His next battle was that for Blanc Mont in the Champagne. There his captain, Captain Henry Worthington, was killed alongside of him. "He was an awfully nice man," says Van Iersel. "Always there, cheerful and quiet. He would talk to you as you marched along; he would talk to anybody."

Ladislav Janda became his captain. He was a Bohemian. "An awfully nice fellow," says Van Iersel. "Right in front, right along with his men all the time; he sure was right there every time."

Content. That seems to have been the little Dutchman's particular quality during a war ordeal which drove so many men almost mad, and not so few absolutely mad. Content. He liked his officers, he liked his comrades, he liked the food, he liked the fighting, he liked the life. I asked him about it, of a Sunday morning in his back yard among the cabbages and the chickens, after we had talked a long time.

"Well, then, you don't consider you had such a hard time in the war?" I asked.

His big blue eyes fixed themselves upon me in wonder. "Why, no," he said after a while. "Of course not. Why, I had a great time in the army! That is—after the first few months. After I stopped

peeling potatoes. After that—why, I had a *great* time!"

Louis then found himself in the Argonne. The great battle had been going on since September 26, the Americans pressing desperately a desperately resisting enemy; in rain, in fog, half starved, wet and cold and sick, barbed wire ahead and shells and machine guns, a sea of mud behind, across which food could not be brought up, nor blankets nor equipment, nor anything an army needs. On October 31 the veteran Second Division had relieved the exhausted Forty-second, somewhere near the spot, by the way, where Thomas Neibaur had won his Medal of Honor a few days before. The Second had then sprung forward in great blows, and on November 9 Van Iersel's company was on the banks of the river Meuse, with the Germans holding the fortified village of Mouzon on the other side. There were only two more days to go before the end of the war, but of course none of the fighting men knew that. What Van Iersel's outfit knew was that it must cross the river and take the fortified village on the other side.

They had been near the river several days, held up by that formidable position on the other side, that huddle of stone houses around a stone church,

filled with men and machine guns. It was known that a German bridge crossed the stream there, but no one had been able to approach it. Twice a day a patrol would be sent out in an attempt to get some knowledge of that bridge. It would gain a sunken road about six hundred feet from the bank, but when the men tried to rise and go on from there, the village across the way became a barking kennel of aroused machine guns. A snarling hail of bullets whipped down upon the patrol, driving it back, flopping it back into the sunken road. The patrol returned without having seen the bridge.

Then on November 9 an idea came into the head of Ladislav Janda, Van Iersel's captain. He had in some way gained information as to the defense of the bridge at night. It seemed that at night only two sentries guarded that bridge. This was interesting information; the captain's idea was builded upon it. The captain called Corporal Ludovicus Van Iersel, who at the time was acting sergeant.

"I've got a job for you," he said. "Will you do it?"

Van Iersel said, "I'll do anything you want me to do."

The captain went on to tell Louis, almost with

compassion, of the two poor sentinels on the bridge. "All you've got to do," he said, "is get one and then the other." After that the patrol could cross into the village in the dark and secure valuable information. "I want you to take a trench knife," he said. "Take your automatic too, but I'd rather you'd use your trench knife. The knife won't make any noise. Get those two guards. Without making any noise."

"All right," said Van Iersel, "I'll go if I can pick my own men."

When darkness had come he moved about among his fellows, whisperingly tagged six he liked and trusted, and they set out.

It was a dark night, with a low canopy of clouds, and they advanced gingerly. The enemy was nervous and jumpy; every now and then the silence burst abruptly into a bedlam of chattering machine guns, while bullets whipped by. The patrol crept forward in the intervals of silence and hugged the earth, close, when the loud squalls flew by. Finally they reached the sunken road, six hundred feet from the river, and stopped, while their eyes tried to pierce the darkness ahead. The village of Mouzon, their objective on the other side, was but a blur in the night; everything for the moment was still.

They climbed out and went on down hill toward the river.

In the darkness, unperceived, they reached the river bank. They could see vaguely the bridge which no patrol had yet been able to reach. But there seemed to be something queer about this bridge; something vaguely distorted, twisted, about it in the gloom. Van Iersel left his six men ambushed on the bank and slid down alone to the water edge.

In spite of the darkness he saw now what it was which had seemed so queer about the bridge. There was no bridge. The Germans had blown up the bridge. Only a mass of wreckage, of piles and planks, flung at all angles, stretched from his feet across the water. Van Iersel's men slid down after him; they all stood peering. "There was no noise." That is the way he describes it now. "Nothing happened."

Stuck upright in the bank were several piles of the destroyed structure. "Here, you guys, get behind those piles," said Van Iersel; and the six boys of the patrol threw themselves down behind the timbers. "Wait for me here," he said, and stepped out upon the wreck of the bridge. The débris were so entangled that they held. He started to cross. For his mission was still in his mind: the two guards on

the bridge. Everything was so quiet, "I thought maybe they were asleep," he said to me.

Climbing over heaped wreckage, slipping under, sometimes, he moved out over the river—on his side the explosion had piled the débris into a mass like a log jam. He got half way across. But here the log jam ceased. Clear water ran at his feet.

On the other side of the narrow ribbon of water, however, the shuffled material of the blown-up bridge made another, still greater jam that reached to the bank—the German bank—and to the village—the German-occupied village. And spanning the lustrous strip between the two heaps of timber was a plank, a single, slim, precarious but inviting plank. It went across from log jam to log jam, from the jam on the American side to the jam on the German side. It led straightly to those invisible silent guards his captain had been told of.

Ludovicus Van Iersel stepped out upon that single plank.

I don't know that any step taken in the whole war was any braver than this one; than this step in midnight blackness and silence by one altogether alone, upon a single plank in the center of a river, not a hundred feet from a huddle of stone houses

crammed full with vigilant enemy armed with all the thunderbolts of a modern civilization.

The little Dutchman took that step, then another. Balancing as on a tight rope, he reached the center of the plank.

An electric bell began whirring loud somewhere in the dark and silent stone village, and at the same time the plank lurched and vanished from under his feet. That inviting plank had been a cunning enemy's deadly trap. The village woke into bedlam. Shouts arose, shots rang, the rapid tat-tat of the machine guns set in, while heavy flights of lead whipped by.

Van Iersel, as he felt the plank dropping under his feet, had from this disappearing support taken one wild leap. Which way had he leaped? Back toward the solidity from which he had come? Back toward his comrades? He had not. His leap had been forward, towards the heap of timbers on the German side. He missed; into the slim stream between the two heaps of wreckage of the destroyed bridge, he fell.

It was black down there, and cold and wet; he was leaden with the weight of his equipment. Happily he did not stay there long. The swift current

banged him up against where he wanted to go—the heaped timbers on the German side. He threw one hand up, then the other, and chinned himself along the slimy wall till he stood on the jam. Flights of lead were buzzing by. He charged toward Mouzon, and headlong, as if in a football tackle, dived under a loose roof of tangled boards, sticks, posts and piles which the blasting of the bridge had meshed there.

The firing was terrific; the Germans in Mouzon were blazing away with everything they had. For a while he cowered low in his hiding place. "All hell was popping," he describes it. Then he recalled his mission, his job,—patrols are not sent just to play—and with all hell popping, he began to stick his head up through his loose roof to reconnoiter. He would stick his head out, take a sharp look, then pull his head in again like a turtle.

What he first noted was the position of the machine guns which at the moment were so busily raking the river. Their short venomous stabs in the dark gave them away. With some surprise, and no little admiration for the intelligence of the foe, he noted that they were firing from the river bank itself. Eight emplacements had been dug into the very bank; eight machine guns, from the bank, were commanding the bridge.

Etching this fact deep into his mind, he continued his little investigation. He studied everything carefully, meanwhile keeping himself "pretty well protected" (these are his words). He marked the size and the condition and the position of the fragments of the blasted bridge. He even evaluated the height of some of the pontoon uprights which were still intact—and, as it proved later, missed being right by seven inches. Out of his nest of crisscrossed logs his head would pop out, turn this way, turn that way, and pop in again, while the enemy, nervous and jumpy, probably having seen nothing and seeing nothing, but devoured with suspicion, expecting an attack, filled the night with lead and uproar.

Louis was very near them; he was right under them; he could hear their voices. One cry he especially decided to remember: a resonant shout calling for a barrage. When he heard that, he began to think that perhaps it was time to be going home. He had a lot of information now, but the information was no good where it was: it would be good only at headquarters. And since that information was inside of him, he had better get himself back to headquarters.

He started back. "That was the worst of the

whole thing," he now says. He left his rifle behind and started crawling along the débris. It was slow work, and heart-pounding work; he knew that the slightest slip, the slightest noise, the least carelessness, would bring the annihilating blasts of eight machine guns converging into his body and the valuable information it contained. And he had to study his way. The way by which he had come was no good now: an indispensable plank was missing! He puzzled out a path as he crept along. There was a place where tangled timbers of the wrecked bridge nosed out fairly close to the American shore of that French river. Beyond, with fifteen feet of clear water between, a naked upright stood intact. Beyond the upright, with twelve feet of water between, was the shore. He figured he could leap from the end of the tangled timbers to a hugging grasp of the upright pile, and then, maybe, somehow, jump the remaining gap to the bank.

So, gaining the farthest possible tip of the débris, he leaped for the pile. He made it. There he was, hugging that slimy post like a bear, the river swirling about his feet.

Just then, from the Mouzon side, the Germans sent up a flare. It burst high up in the air; falling slowly at the end of its little parachute, it

drenched the landscape with its hard, cruel light, and pitilessly picked out Louis, wrapped about his post in the middle of the river. And tat-tat-tat, the machine guns, quieted for a moment, alertly burst out again (afterwards Van Iersel found thirty-six holes in the seat, folds, and pockets of his breeches).

"Oh, God, I was scared!" he now says of that moment. "Oh, boy, I was! I thought that flare would never go out. It stayed up there a hundred years. I sure was scared. I don't think I'll ever forget, as old as I be!"

When dear darkness had returned he did not wait for another flare but took the second jump of his chosen itinerary, and, under the inspiration of the moment, made it. He saw the place again a few days later, after the armistice, and could not believe that jump. "I had jumped twelve feet to shore without a run!"—thus he told it to me ten years later, his eyes dilated with wonder. By "without a run" he means from a hugging position around a post.

His faithful patrol was waiting on the bank. One of the boys had been killed, another badly wounded. He ordered them back but did not wait for them, and at full speed galloped to battalion headquarters with his tale. "I repeated everything to the major,"

—that is the way he tells of it now—"then flopped unconscious. I'd had quite an experience, let me tell you."

Two hours later he woke up in a dugout graced by the name of sick ward. But meanwhile something of note had happened. The major, having received Louis' report, had ordered the battalion back some distance. And the movement had hardly been completed when, r-r-r-r-rump, down came the German barrage on the evacuated line, churning up the earth, filling the funk holes, bursting in the dugouts.

"So," says Van Iersel, puzzling a bit, "I guess that's why I got the medal. Because I found out that barrage was coming."

§

Near Coblenz in February, 1919, the Congressional Medal of Honor was pinned on him. A plan which had been forming in his head for some time then took definite shape. He asked for two weeks' leave, crossed over to Holland, and there—

Do you remember Hendrika de Ronde, the little girl whom he saw when she was but a baby, and who later went to school with him? Well, there in

Dussen, his native town, he married her, in the Catholic church, under special dispensation. Two weeks he spent in Dussen with his young bride, with his mother, his brothers and sisters, the friends of his childhood; then back to his outfit he went to do his part in properly occupying the Rhine. And it was not till a year after the division had returned to the United States and he had been discharged that he saw Hendrika again, crossing over to Holland on the pay he had saved, and returning to the United States with her for good. The new family had grown by that time. There was a little John in Hendrika's arms when she landed.

And now little John is nine years old, and has a little brother Sebastian, six years old, and another little brother Louis, three years old, and the whole family lives in a little cottage away out in 112th Street in Los Angeles. Why Los Angeles? Because—I forgot to tell of this before—one day during the war a gas shell burst right at the door of Louis' dug-out, and one of his lungs was weakened. He came to Los Angeles after many efforts, much worry, many vicissitudes.

But now he is all right—almost. He works as chainman with the engineers of the city of Los

Angeles. His salary brings him about a hundred and fifty dollars a month. The Government gives him thirty-four dollars a month because of his bad lung. He has a "bugalow," almost paid for, and in the back garden he raises chickens—beautiful, russet-lustrous chickens—and lettuce and cabbages and potatoes. A real family man is Louis Van Iersel, Medal of Honor; gentle, industrious, patient, affectionate. He is all right now—if nothing happens, if nothing changes. If, for instance, no sickness comes.

Now and then Louis Van Iersel is asked by some organization to come in his uniform as an example to the young. He slips on his old uniform, and on it spreads his medals. What medals? First he places around his neck the Congressional Medal of Honor. Then he pins on his breast a Croix de Guerre with star, a Croix de Guerre with palm, a Medaille Militaire, an Italian Merito di Guerra, a Montenegrin War Cross. And beneath these he attaches the medal of the King of England for rescue at sea, and the medal of the New York Life Saving Benevolent Association for rescue at sea.

When his family was not so large and he could still afford to attend the conventions of the American Legion, Louis used to be twitted not a little about these last two medals. Some of his Legion-

naire friends, who were more up on military usage than he is, seemed to think these medals did not belong. They would pretend to mistake them for Christian Endeavor badges.

But he's an ingenuous little Dutchman. He kept right on wearing them.

Captain Nelson M. Holderman

CAPTAIN HOLDERMAN

The Citation

Nelson M. Holderman, Captain 307th Infantry, 77th Division Northeast of Binarville, in the forest of Argonne, France, October 2-8, 1918. Captain Holderman commanded a company of a battalion which was cut off and surrounded by the enemy. He was wounded on October 4, on October 5, and again on October 7, but throughout the entire period, suffering great pain and subjected to fire of every character, he continued personally to lead and encourage the officers and men under his command with unflinching courage and with distinguished success. On October 6, in a wounded condition, he rushed through enemy machine gun and shell fire and carried two wounded men to a place of safety.

ON October 1, 1918, the Seventy-seventh Division of the American army, butting northward on a seven mile front through the thick, tangled, gloomy forest of the Argonne, found itself stopped before a bristle of enemy positions still more formidable than those through which, for

seven long days, it had alternately wormed and trampled its way in the face of an old, wise, and wily enemy. Every attack that day upon the forest, at once a great fortress and a cunning trap, broke down with heavy loss.

Yet the strategic situation, in the great battle now flaming from the Aisne to the Meuse, said clearly that the Seventy-seventh Division must not stop, must advance. The command ordered a new attack, to take place along the entire divisional front, a half hour after noon of October 2.

At twelve-thirty of October 2 the division attacked, along with the French, who were to its left. The French fought forward until they were before a position called the Pavillon de la Palette, then, broken, were thrown back. The right of the American division was unable to pierce, under a tornado of machine gun bullets, the thick wire before them. But, in between, the left part of the division broke through.

This force, fighting thus ahead according to orders, with liaison neither to the right nor to the left, consisted of six companies of the 308th Infantry, together with runners and scouts from headquarters company, and nine machine guns of the 306th Machine Gun Battalion; about six hundred men in

all. They had found in the German defenses what seemed a weak point. All afternoon, combat groups doing hard fighting to right and left, they progressed along the east slope of a little gulch running almost directly northward, and as the gray drizzly day was darkening, reached the objective assigned to their commander, Major Charles W. Whittlesey. This was a point where the little gulch along which they had been forcing their way debouched into a wider ravine that crossed it at right angles.

The command slid down the ravine's thickly wooded southern slopes, crossed its bed—a flat morass—and established itself on the lower part of its northern slope.

Behind them was the flat, sparsely wooded creek bed, and behind that the undulating thick forest out of which they had come. Ahead of them, on a steep rise which at points beetled above them, the somber forest reëstablished itself, impenetrable to the eye, mysterious with the presence of a hidden foe. The night was cold and wet, the site sinister; to the right and the left, where the stir and the warmth of fighting comrades should have been, were only uncertainty and silence.

Fox-holes were dug in an elliptic line, to meet attacks possible from any side; machine guns were

set up, outposts sent out; a chain of runners was established to communicate with regimental headquarters at the rear. The men, without blankets or overcoats, and already on short rations, lay down in the penetrating cold. A small force now appeared on the southern side of the ravine and halted there in the darkness. This was Company K of the 307th Infantry. It had attacked several hours after Major Whittlesey's command, together with two other companies which had been repulsed. It had broken through and come up along the same small gulch as the main command. Its captain was Nelson M. Holderman, a young National Guard officer from California, who, starting his first big battle less than a week before, had already got himself a citation and a Croix de Guerre.

This small force of ninety men spent, on the southern slope of the ravine, a night like that of the men on the northern slope: tensely alert, ringed about with the sense of a silent and secret hostility. A patrol, sent out on reconnaissance, vanished and never returned. At dawn the company moved across the ravine and joined the larger force, wedding itself to its fate.

Already Major Whittlesey was taking his dispositions for the day. Patrols were pushed out to

the right and the left; ration details were sent to the rear; E Company was ordered to the south, to communicate with and bring up two companies which had been left behind at the time of the original advance.

E Company crossed the bed of the ravine and vanished into the woods to the south. At eight o'clock a German plane flew over the position; within half an hour artillery fire burst about, and Major Whittlesey sent off the first of five pigeons he had taken with him. Few shells, however, struck the chosen reverse slope on which the command clung, tilted as it was against the guns' trajectory. The gun fire ceased; a slow, lazy, whirring sound was heard in the air, and a heavy missile fell with a great roar. The enemy had brought up a heavy-caliber mortar. It was lobbing its fat missiles over, and dropping them almost perpendicularly upon the position.

A platoon was sent out in an effort to capture this mortar. What was left of the platoon soon returned. It had been met by converging machine gun fire; it had been unable to perform its mission. The mortar continued its ponderous, measured and terrible work.

A rapid succession of bad news followed. The

patrols which had been sent to the right and the left returned to report that there were no Americans on the right and no French on the left; that on both these flanks the enemy was in force. At ten o'clock eighteen men and an officer, wounded, exhausted and shaken, staggered in from the south. They were what was left of E Company, which earlier had been sent to attack in that direction. They had found the enemy where friends should have been, had been enveloped, almost destroyed; this pitiful remnant had cut its way out. Meanwhile the ration details sent out were not returning. They were never to return. And at ten-thirty the runner-posts, last slim chain to the rear, were simultaneously attacked, part annihilated, part scattered. The command was cut off, isolated in this gloomy ravine in the heart of the great forest.

The enemy began to close in on all sides. They could be seen on the hills to the rear, across the flat bed of the ravine. They were setting up machine guns which, from that point, unlike the artillery ahead, could fire into an incline conveniently tilted toward them. These guns were soon at work, while the heavy mortar methodically looped over its shells. Whenever the men shifted out of fox-holes under a mortar shell's descending

threat, they came into the razing machine gun fire.

Firing could be heard to the south; the division was evidently fighting to come up. Major Whittlesey determined upon another effort to establish communication with the main body of the division. For this effort he chose K Company of the 307th, Captain Holderman's company, the one which had come up last and which had joined the command at dawn.

Across the flat morass it started, toward the wooded heights to the rear, and as it crossed, a hidden enemy voice was loudly calling out its position and its progress to those awaiting it in the forest beyond. When the company reached the woods, the hostile forces had vanished, retreating deeper into the thicket. The company followed. But the deeper they pushed among the trees the heavier the fire rose which converged upon them. They crossed a barbed wire system. They came to another, and machine gun bullets whipped into them from all sides. Captain Holderman saw that farther advance was into annihilation; a retirement was ordered. After a hard fight, what was left of the company returned to the beleaguered command, carrying its own dead, and took its place

on the right wing, a place of honor which it was to hold to the end.

It was clear now that the command was surrounded and cut off, and that efforts to break out meant simply a fatal drainage of an already all too puny strength. Major Whittlesey passed out to all officers the following message:

"Our mission is to hold this position at all costs. Have this understood by every man in the command."

The word was passed to every man, and every man understood.

At ten forty-five Major Whittlesey had released a second pigeon. At four-five he sent out a third and was left with only two. All that afternoon machine gun bullets whipped the position, and the big mortar dropped its ponderous projectiles upon it, and the almost invisible pressure increased. Outposts were being forced in; the forest was becoming alive with stirrings, with crawlings, finally with whispers which at times rose to murmurs.

Suddenly, from the cliff above, a voice called out in the dusk a weird "Adolph!" From the flank came an answer: "Hier, Eitel." From the rear came another guttural "Hier!" Then an ominous "Alles ist in Stellung"—Everything is ready.

The machine guns, for a time sleeping, broke out into new clatter; heavy flights of lead stung the position, and from the hill above, out of the trees, the leaves, the thicket, a rain of potato-masher grenades descended upon the men. They lay still in their fox-holes, reserving their fire. A line of enemy riflemen emerged from the bushes and advanced with the grenadiers. The Americans went to their feet and poured everything they had—from rifle, automatic, Chauchat, machine gun—into a foe within grip at last. In ten minutes everything was as before, except for the cries of the wounded out there in the brush. The first attack had been beaten off.

But the wounded were not only those who could be heard crying and moaning in the forest; the Lost Battalion, as it was to be called, had suffered grievously this first day—one hundred and sixty killed and wounded. As night came, the men turned to the care of the wounded. There was no surgeon. There were only three enlisted men of the medical corps. They had with them only pitifully inadequate supplies. That night every man in the command mortgaged his future and risked suffering and death by giving up his first aid kit to the wounded. Deeper holes were dug for these in the center of

the position, behind tree trunks or among roots, to afford shelter from the grenades which rolled down, during attacks, from the slope in front. The night was penetratingly cold; without blankets or overcoats, their bellies empty, for rations were now gone, the men suffered bitterly, and the wounded beyond imagination. But these stubbornly gritted their teeth and dammed the groans that issued out of their tortured bodies, so that the foe, lurking in the thicket near by and on the cliff above, should obtain no encouragement and no comfort.

A ghastly dawn broke upon a force haggard, worn and famished, but of morale still high. Everyone felt certain that the Franco-American lines would come up that day. The dead were buried. Patrols were sent out. At eight-thirty the big German mortar began firing again, accompanied now by two lighter ones. The men had deepened their fox-holes so as to be fairly well protected against the snipers and the harassing machine gun fire, but could do nothing against these diabolical bundles of detonation and death which dropped upon them out of the sky. The ponderous projectiles could be seen rising sluggishly up in the air, then commencing their deliberate descent. The men learned to gauge to some degree the plunging fall;

they would shift under it, and, undaunted and defiant, jest with one another as to the probable recipient. "Here's one for you, Gus," or "That's for you, Alex," they shouted; and, rolling out of the fox-holes, came into the machine gun fire.

The scouts returned and reported the presence of the enemy in all directions. At ten-thirty Major Whittlesey sent off his fourth pigeon.

All morning the men lay in their fox-holes, varying their positions under the mortar shells, sniping the machine guns that flayed them from the slopes to the flanks and rear. Firing to the south heartened them,—the division was still fighting to come up—and as afternoon came they were given a great treat. An American artillery barrage dropped on their tormentors to the rear, and slowly rolled over them. It crept nearer; it was churning the soft creek bed at their feet. In another moment, they knew, it would lift, it would pass over their heads, and come down grindingly upon the enemy ahead, as it had upon those behind.

It gave a little leap, and came down square athwart the position itself.

For an hour and a half it remained there, devastatingly, while enemy mortar and machine guns gleefully joined in. This was almost too much to

bear—but the men bore it. A few, delirious in this crazy disaster, wandered away and were captured; the others remained and took the shells of friend as they had taken the shells of foe; and when the error barrage had finally vanished, cleared the damage, bandaged the newly wounded, buried the newly dead. Whittlesey's fifth pigeon had whirred away in the roar and the flame. "We are along the road parallel 276.4," it had gone off crying. "Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly upon us." And this was the last pigeon.

At three-thirty came a new excitement, tinged with hope this time. An American plane was circling high above. White panels were put out. The plane whizzed down, above a whipping lash of enemy bullets, then scooted away. Soon another plane appeared, and for a long time circled low, dropping long streamers to which, the men knew, messages must be attached. Although all those fell out of reach, spirits went high. The men were certain now that their position was known, that they were not being abandoned. When, at five o'clock, the enemy tried another surprise attack with grenades, it was cut to pieces.

Attention turned again to the wounded, as night came, for the casualties had been heavy this sec-

ond day. The supply of dressings had all gone; many of the wounds were ragged amputations. The men, without overcoat or blanket, gave up their wrap-leggins to the desperate bandaging of bleeding stumps. Water was got from a hole in the little creek that flowed at the foot of the position. This was in the open morass and enfiladed; the Germans had set up machine guns to command it by night. A man would go down with many canteens tied to a stick. Sometimes he returned with his precious supply. Sometimes there would be a sound as of cow-bells struck with a stick, and the man did not come back.

Most of the water thus brought up was given to the wounded; the others, without food, lay down and tried to sleep in a cold, drizzly rain. Rifle fire again drummed in the south: the division was still fighting to come up. At nine o'clock the night suddenly became cruel day as the enemy sent up flares on all sides, and a storm of hand grenades rained upon the position thus picked out in black. But the men, infuriated, came out of their holes, fell upon the grenadiers, and drove them back up the hill. The flares went out; darkness returned, and silence, broken only by the groans of the wounded.

The morning of October 5, the third day of the

siege, found the survivors extremely tired and hungry. They tried to bury their dead. Machine gun bullets screamed into those thus engaged; the attempt had to be given up, and from now on the dead lay unburied. When, at a boy's side, a comrade died, while still firing the boy scooped now and then a little handful of earth and threw it over; nothing more could be done. Hope of relief remained strong, however, for to the rear, where was the division, and in the southwest, where were the French, heavy firing was going on, the rumble of the Chauchats distinct from the sharper rattle of the German machine guns. Planes, American and French, flew over. The Germans, though still sniping, were quieting down. Perhaps they were retreating. The firing to the south and southwest was tremendous.

But the uproar ebbed slowly away; waned; ceased; enemy groups appeared once more, strong, on the slopes. At four o'clock all their machine guns turned upon the position. For twenty minutes the command lay quiet and low beneath the buzzing canopy; then, as the enemy charged with hand grenades, emerged and decimated the attack with cool, accurate, and rapid fire from rifle, machine gun and Chauchat.

An American plane appeared soon afterward,

acting strangely, whirring to and fro over the ravine, dropping low, persistent among the bullets geysering up from below. Another appeared, imitating the strange maneuvers, and it was then seen that packages were dropping out of the cockpits. The lost battalion divined what these packages contained: food for the famished; dressings for the wounded. But the packages would not drop right. The speed animating them, as they were released above, sent them drifting by overhead, to plump into the swamps or strike among the trees surrounding the position, but never on the position. Taunting shouts came from the enemy in the forest, in the bush, as they opened the packages and loudly detailed in English the nature of their finds. "Bacon —chocolate—bread—" words more beautiful than an enumeration of precious stones to the starving men obliged to listen.

That night—another bitterly cold night—bandages were taken from the wounded who had died to dress the wounded who still lived. Wrap-leggins which living men had given up were once more yielded, this time by the dead.

The fourth day, October 6, began to drag out its dolorous length. The machine guns and rifles got to work early; the lethargic but implacable mortar

shells rose slowly into the air and dropped heavily upon the position. Firing could still be heard to the south. But so far and faint it spoke despair rather than hope. At nine-thirty an American plane whirred about, flying low and dropping packages, which once more fell out of reach and into the hands of an enemy jeering behind the trees.

A friendly barrage followed. It fell first to the rear and worked toward the position. The men watched it in apprehension as it churned the bed of the ravine into mud. Would it do now as the other had done—come down square across their backs? It lifted—it passed over them—it came down upon the enemy ahead, who were massing at the very moment for a new attack.

The planes renewed their efforts at revictualing this starving garrison in the depths of a forest—heroic efforts which resulted only in torment, for still the food so needed, the medicines, the dressings, fell just out of reach and into the hands of the jeering enemy. In the afternoon the Germans attacked again with grenades, after a furious preparation with rifle, machine gun and Minenwerfer, and once more the melting little band of Americans repulsed them with small-arm.

That night again wrap-leggin bandages were

taken from the dead to dress fresh wounds. Ammunition was running low. Details were sent out to creep along the edges of the position, where enemy killed lay too close to be removed by their comrades, and gathered clips from the dead bodies, as well as rifles in which they could be used.

The morning of October 7, the fifth day, rose on a terrible scene. The position was a shambles, a wallow of mud, offal, gangrene and death. There were almost as many dead as there were valid, and almost twice as many wounded. These, pitifully filthy in their rags, huddled in holes and still refused to scream their suffering. The valid men were so weak that it was difficult to find any who could walk an incline for the necessary patrols.

Yet such patrols were sent out. The situation was unchanged; almost immediately the patrols were driven in. There was still a low rumble of battle in the south, but it seemed a thousand miles away. Above, the persistent airplanes snarled and roared, and dropped food and medicine and bandages—always and ever out of reach. The enemy attacked at noon. Gaunt specters repulsed them.

At four o'clock all firing ceased; in the strange silence a white rag, high at the end of a long stick, was seen moving up from the left. It was borne

by an American soldier who limped on a wounded leg.

The soldier was Private Hollinghead. In the morning, with eight others, he had crawled out in an attempt to secure one of the packages of food dropped by the planes. Five of his comrades had been killed, he and the others captured. He was now being sent in as a parliamentary. He reported to Major Whittlesey, and gave him the following message, typed and in English.

"Sir: The bearer of this present, Private Hollinghead, has been taken prisoner by us. He refuses to give the German Intelligence officer any answer to his questions, and is quite an honorable fellow, doing honor to his fatherland in the strictest sense of the word.

"He has been charged against his will, believing that he is doing wrong to his country to carry forward the present letter to the officer in charge of the battalion of the Seventy-seventh Division, with the purpose to recommend this commander to surrender with his force, as it would be quite useless to resist any more, in view of the present conditions.

"The suffering of your wounded men can be heard over here in the German lines, and we are appealing to your humane sentiments to stop. A white flag shown by one of your men will tell us that you agree with these conditions. Please treat Private Hollinghead as an honorable man. He is quite a soldier. We envy you.

"The German Commanding Officer."

Major Whittlesey's answer was to order taken in the panels which had been set out as signals for aviators. He meant to have no white showing at all. But the news of the proffer, and the wordings of the note, began to filter about the men, and soon they were giving their own less austere response. "You want us, you German —— — ——?" they shouted toward the forest all about, up the cliff beetling above them. "You want us? Well, then come and *get* us, you German —— — ——!"

They were preparing meanwhile for the attack sure to come. Little ammunition was left. Of the nine machine guns, only two remained. Men sharpened their bayonets in the wet earth, sensing the approach of the final tragedy. Guttural commands were resounding on all sides. The men dragged themselves to their firing positions. Some of the wounded wormed themselves up, to fire a last shot ere they died.

The attack they now faced was the fiercest which yet they had had to withstand. Machine guns, rifles, flayed the position; the mortars thudded heavily into it; a line of grenadiers advanced, raining bombs down the slopes, and endeavoring to envelop the right flank. Fanning the last spark of their exhausted strength, the men managed to shoot coolly

and fast; wounded, with the death rattle in their throats, emptied a last charge. Then the right flank found itself enveloped in snapping flames. The enemy had brought up liquid fire.

This raised to madness the oozing last strength of the expiring command. Grinning skeletons rose up from the ground, charged the fire-spurting cylinders, and killed their wielders. The attack ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

The men stood their ground awaiting another. Rifle, machine gun, Chauchat ammunition was practically gone; hand grenades were all gone; the two remaining machine guns were without crews to wield them. Again bayonets were sharpened in the wet soil. The men knew that the end had come.

That attack never came. The firing to the south grew louder, nearer, rose like a surf coming in on the tide. To the right and the left, parties of Germans could be seen drifting by as if before a great wind. Ahead, the pressure was releasing; the German wounded lay crying, abandoned in the brush. The ghost-like drift of gray-clad figures increased, then ceased; the drift became one of olive drab. And passing to the right and the left, the relieving force—elements of the 307th Infantry—outposted

the position, secured it, then came in among those who for five days had defended it.

These left silently the fox-holes which they had expected to be their graves, and gathered about their wounded, to minister to them. Thus, with their wounded, they spent a last night here, but in security now, the position, to which they had cemented themselves with blood, guarded on all sides.

In the morning one hundred and ninety men, many of them wounded, were able to walk out. One hundred and seven had been killed; two hundred and seventy-five severely or mortally wounded.

Such was the affair, known as that of the Lost Battalion, in which Nelson Holderman won his Congressional Medal of Honor. He was the captain of K Company, 307th Infantry. When the battalion had gone forward and had been swallowed up on the afternoon of October 2, this company had followed up and joined itself to its risk. It had attacked the next morning in an attempt to cut through to communicate with the division; it had been enveloped, had fought its way out. After that for the rest of the siege it held the right flank of

the besieged command, the point least protected from enfilading fire, and the point most savagely attacked throughout.

Captain Holderman is now commandant of the Veterans' Home of the State of California. I saw him there, a man still young-looking and alert, tremendously interested in his work, and beloved of all the pensioners. But I could not get him to talk. He simply would not talk—not about himself. He insisted I should tell the story of the command as a whole.

But going through his papers I came upon interesting documents. One was a copy of the following letter written by Major Whittlesey, commander of the Lost Battalion, recommending Captain Holderman for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"From Charles W. Whittlesey
"To the Secretary of War:

"1. It is recommended that the Congressional Medal of Honor be awarded Captain Nelson M. Holderman, Company K, 307th Infantry, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy northeast of Binarville in the Forest d'Argonne, France, from the 2nd to the 7th of October, 1918.

"2. While in command of Company K, 307th Infantry, which company held the right flank of the force consisting of six companies of the 308th

Infantry, and which force was cut off and surrounded by the enemy for five days and nights in the Forest d'Argonne, France, from October 2nd to October 7th, 1918, Captain Nelson M. Holderman, though wounded early in the siege and suffering great pain, continued, throughout the entire period, leading and encouraging the officers and men under his command. He was wounded on the 4th of October but remained in action during all attacks made by the enemy upon the position, personally leading his men, himself remaining exposed to fire of every character. He was again wounded on the 5th of October, but continued personally organizing and directing the defense of the right flank against enemy attacks. During the entire period he personally supervised the care of the wounded, exposing himself to shell and machine gun fire that he might help and encourage his men to hold the position. On October 6th, though in a wounded condition, he rushed through shell and machine gun fire and carried two wounded men to a place of safety. This officer, though wounded, continued to direct the defense of the right flank and on the 7th of October was again wounded but continued in action. On the afternoon of October 7th this officer and one man, with pistols and hand grenades alone and single handed, met and dispersed a body of the enemy, killing and wounding most of the party when they attempted to close in on the right flank while their forces were at the same time making a frontal attack, thus saving two machine guns from capture as well as preventing the envelopment of the right flank. Again on the evening of the 7th of October and during the last attack made by the enemy upon the position, a liquid

fire attack was directed on the right flank; though in a wounded and serious condition Captain Holderman remained on his feet, keeping the firing line organized and preventing the envelopment of the right flank. He refused to let his wounds interfere with his duty until after the relief was effected. The successful defense of the position was largely due to his courage. He personally led his men out of the position after assistance arrived and before permitting himself to be attended. The courageous optimism and inspiring bravery of this officer encouraged his men to a successful resistance in spite of five days of fighting, hunger and exposure."

Another paper gave the result of his physical examination in an army hospital, and made mention of the following wounds:

"1. Severe wound, high explosive, involving tissues only, upper third left leg.
"2. Machine gun wound, penetrating upper third left thigh.
"3. Severe shrapnel wound, two inches above right wrist.
"4. Wound from grenade extending from metacarpophalangeal articulation, first, left, to a point on level with first carpal bones.
"5. Shell fragment producing lacerated wound over right instep.
"6. Shrapnel wound, corona of pelvic arch.
"7. Grenade wound involving bridge of nose, face and right thigh."

These were all wounds which Captain Holderman received while commanding his company during the five-day siege, but which could not down him, so that when relief came he was still on his feet and still commanding.

THE

JOHN DAY

COMPANY

INC.